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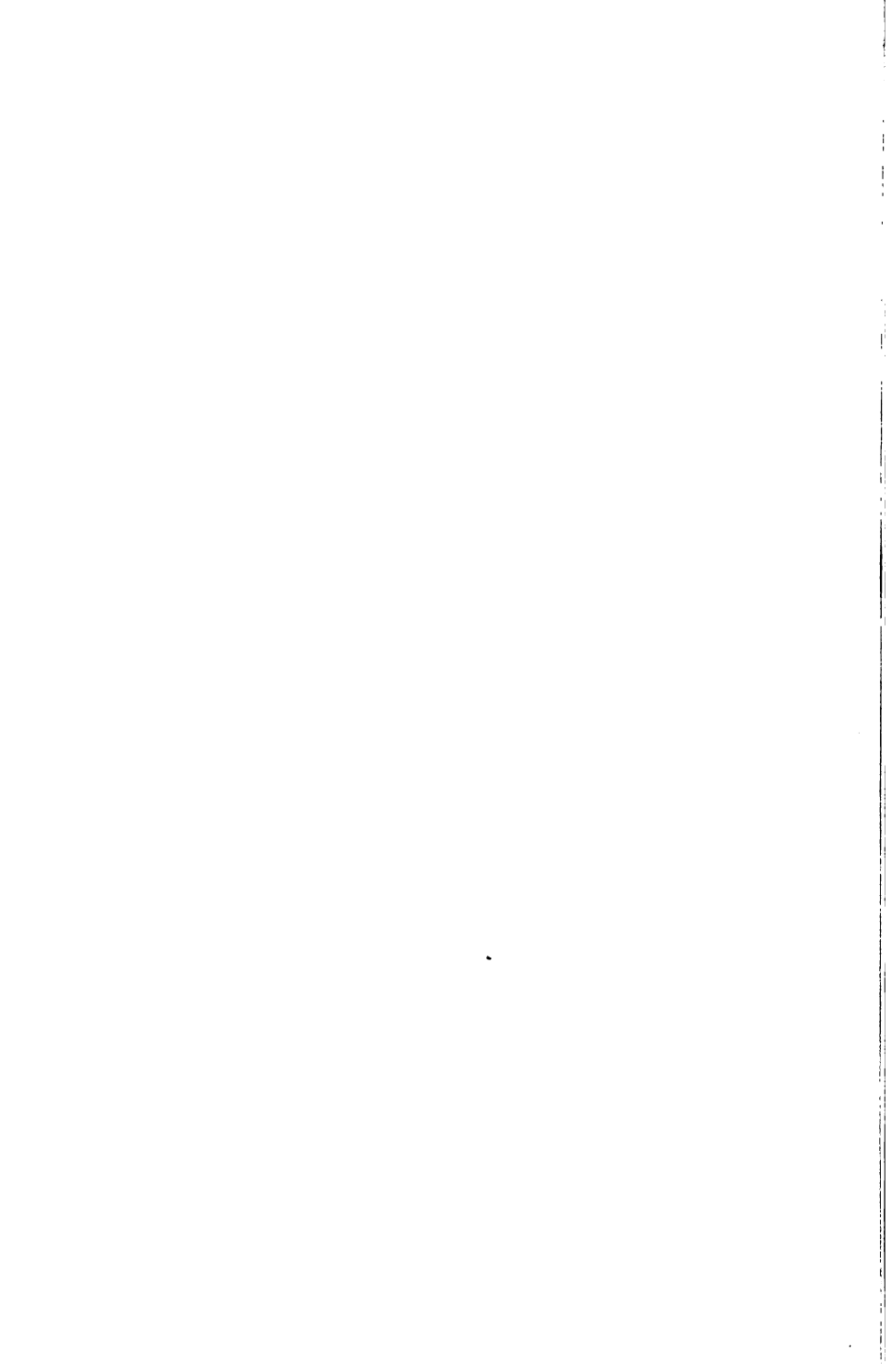
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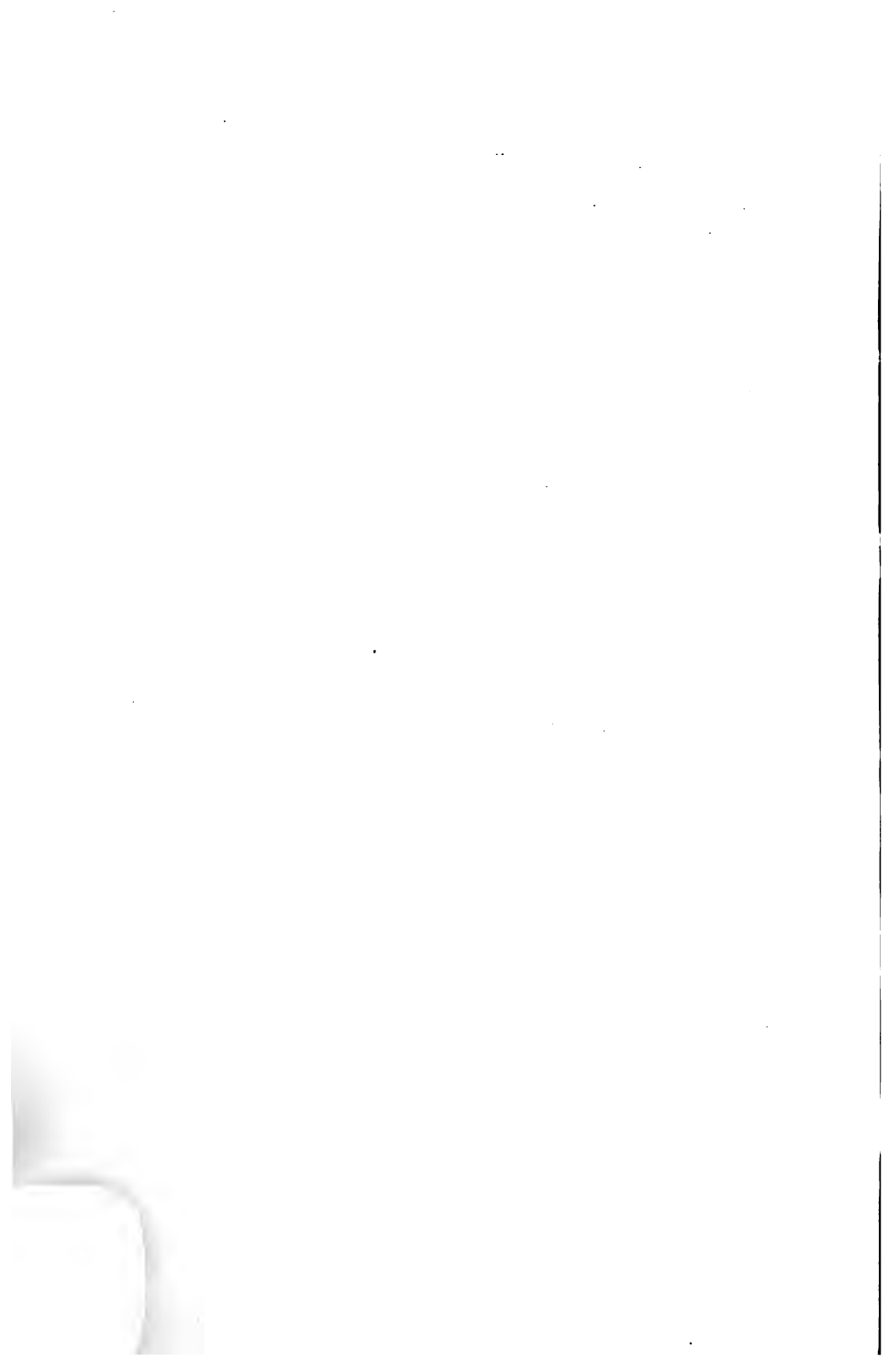
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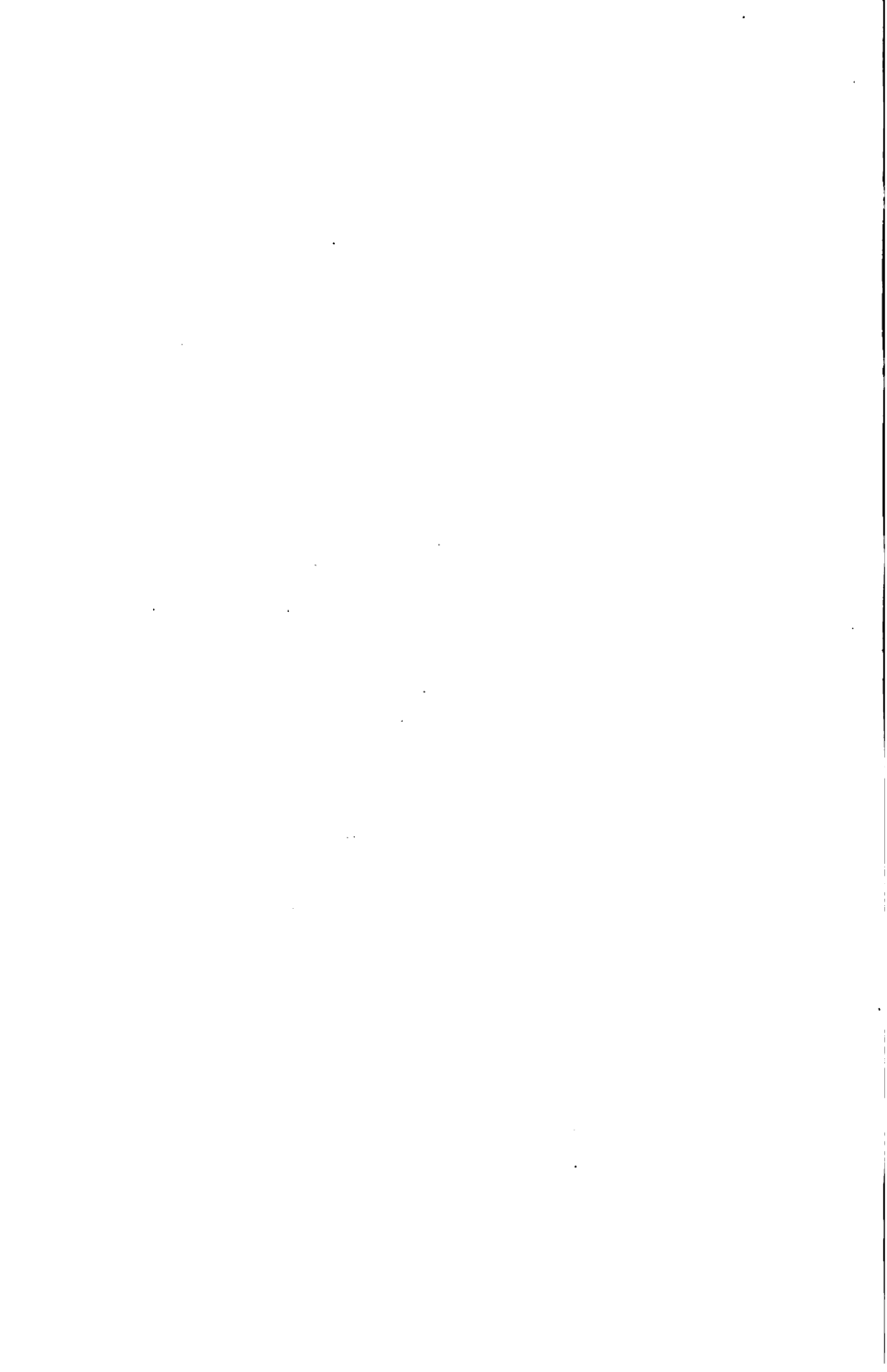






# TALES OF THE TRAIL





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# TALES OF THE TRAIL.

A BOOK OF  
WESTERN SKETCHES IN PROSE

BY  
JAMES W. FOLEY



NEW YORK  
E·P·DUTTON & COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS



# TALES OF THE TRAIL

A BOOK OF  
WESTERN SKETCHES IN VERSE



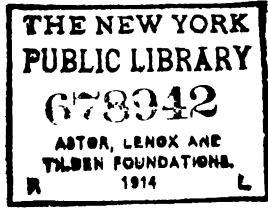
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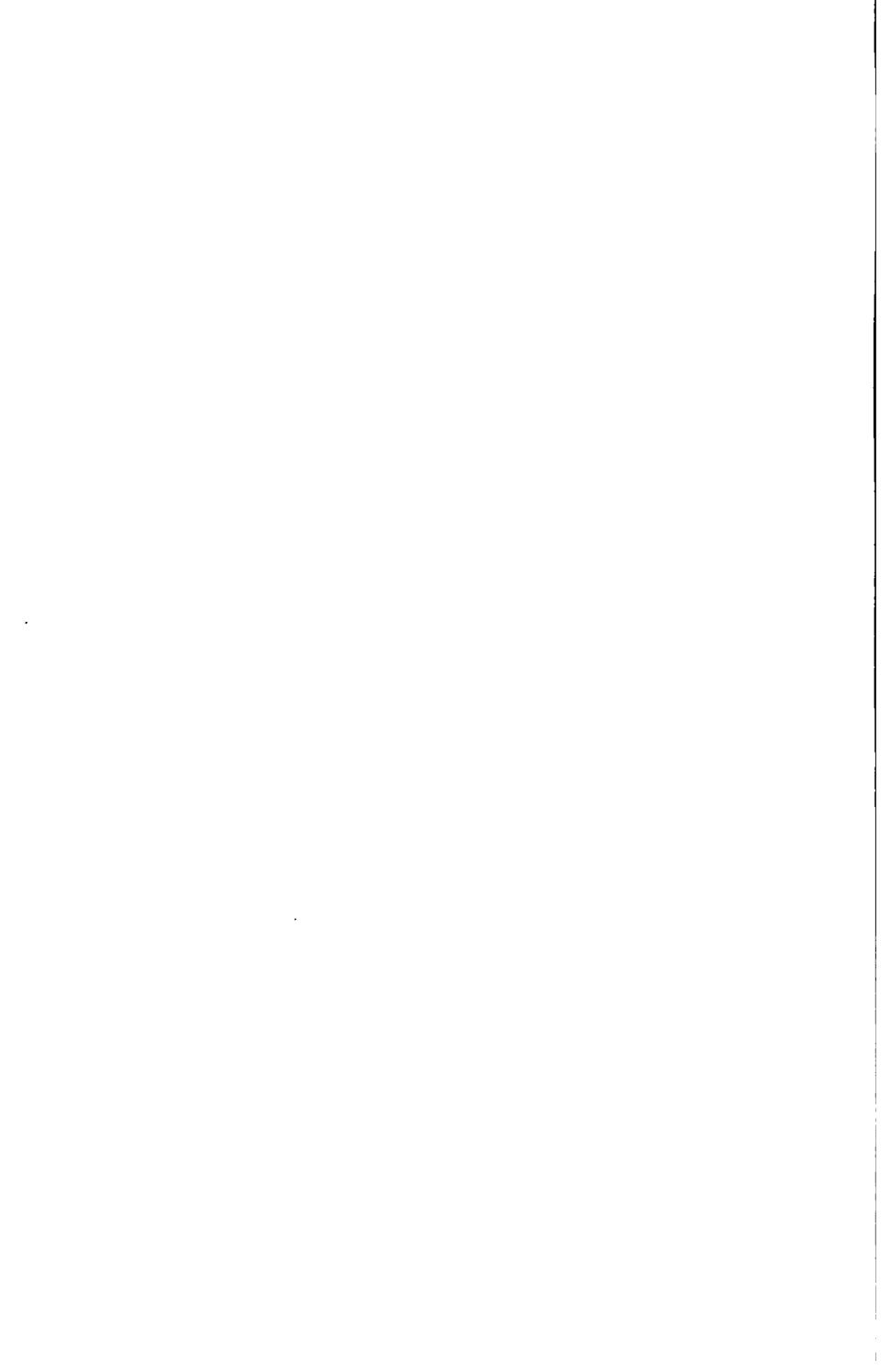
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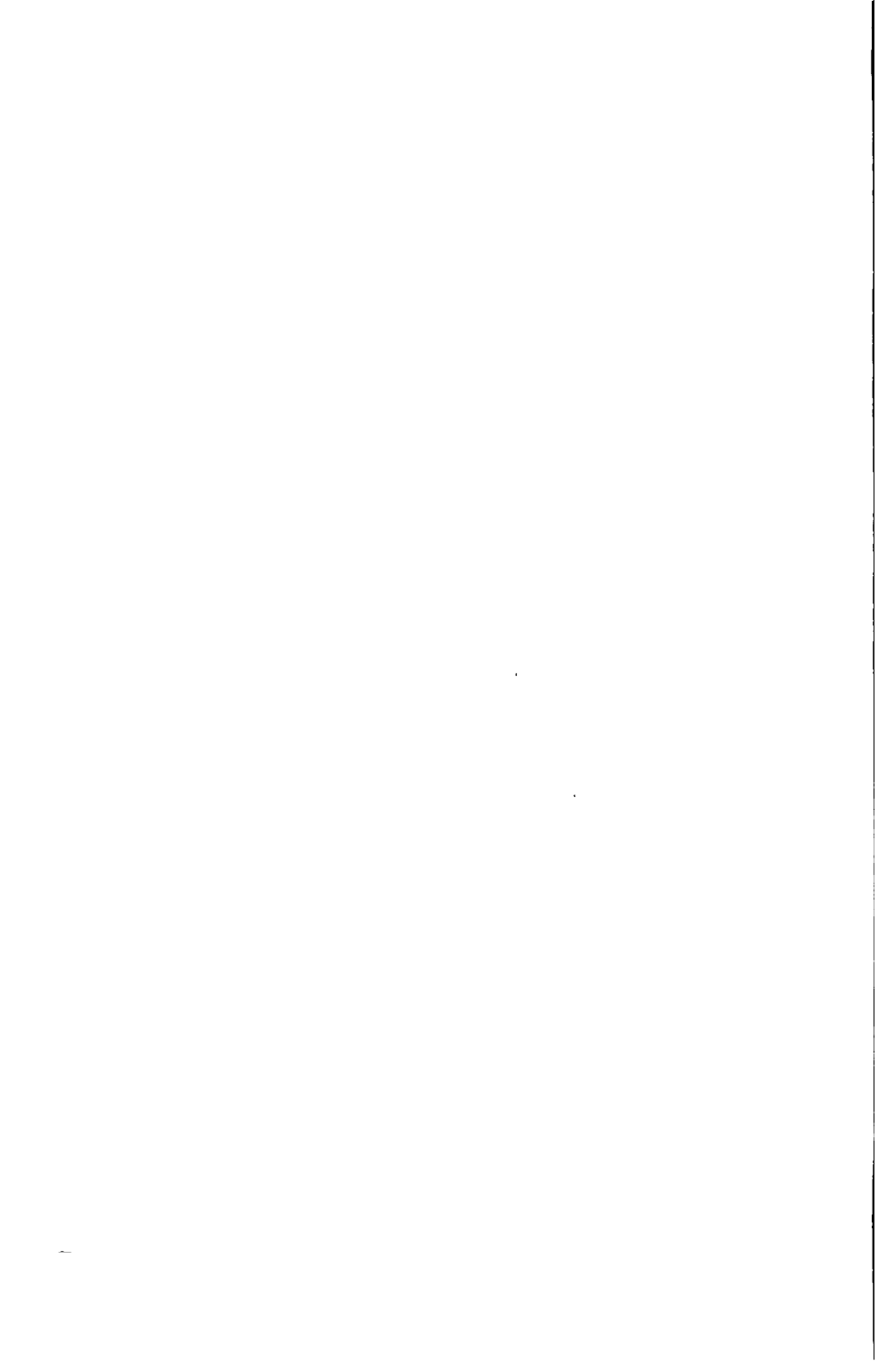
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# TALES OF THE TRAIL



## TALES OF THE TRAIL

### PASSAMQUODDY'S APPLE TODDY

**P**INDAR PEEL, of Passamquoddy,  
Made some birthday apple toddy  
An' gits snubbed by everybody  
(Female sect) in Passamquoddy.

He put apple brandy in it,  
Put hot water in t' thin it,  
Stood an hour t' stir an' spin it,  
Timed it to th' very minute.

Watched it with th' tenderest feelin',  
Knowed it would be soothin', healin',  
Grated in some orange peelin'.  
Toddy, say! That was a real un.

Pindar Peel, of Passamquoddy,  
Sent a bid t' everybody  
To jine him in apple toddy,  
(Hemale sect) in Passamquoddy.

It had big baked apples floatin'  
In it, an' I was a-notin'  
Nutmeg smell, an' Peel was totin'  
Glasses 'round an' jest a-gloatin'.



2 PASSAMQUODDY'S APPLE TODDY

Ezry Beggs was thar, an' Struthers,  
Homer Blake an' Job Caruthers,  
Treadwell Pew an' his two brothers,  
Me an' half a dozen others.

We set thar a while a-gassin',  
Crackin' jokes an' neighbor-sassin',  
An' while toddy was a-passin'  
Ye sh'd hear th' tongues unfasten.

Me ner Job ner anybody  
Ever drunk sech apple toddy  
Made all-wool without no shoddy  
In th' days o' Passamquoddy.

Never see sech sly, deceivin'  
Stuff as that — past all believin';  
Put th' real kibosh on grievin',  
Loosed up tongue-tied fellers even.

Homer Blake an' Job Caruthers  
Sung some college songs (an' others)  
An' Tread Pew an' his two brothers  
Danced a Highland fling with Struthers.

It was winter, an' th' wind er-  
Roarin', but we all begin ter  
Feel th' heat, by jing, an' Pindar  
Shoved Gabe Struthers out th' winder!

PASSAMQUODDY'S APPLE TODDY 3

Then reached out — he seed he'd haf ter  
Pull him back — an' give th' gaff ter  
Gabe, an' shook so hard with laughter  
That he went a-tumblin' after.

Wal, we got 'em back, an' Struthers  
Wrastled Treadwell Pew's two brothers,  
Blacked an eye fer Job Caruthers,  
Skinned my nose an' hurt some others.

But th' was th' best o' feelin'!  
Pindar Peel kep' on a-dealin'  
Toddy out — put in more peelin'.  
Homer Blake nigh kicked th' ceilin'.

Ezry Beggs was that onstable  
He slid underneath th' table,  
Plumb onstiddy, pitch an' gable,  
Tried t' rise, but wasn't able.

Pindar simply kep' th' kittle  
Hard a-bile, full to th' middle,  
Didn't no one have no tittle  
Too much er no jot too little.

Job Caruthers felt like takin'  
Jest a little nap; an' makin'  
Him a bed, laid down till breakin'  
Dawn without no sign o' wakin'.

4 PASSAMQUODDY'S APPLE TODDY

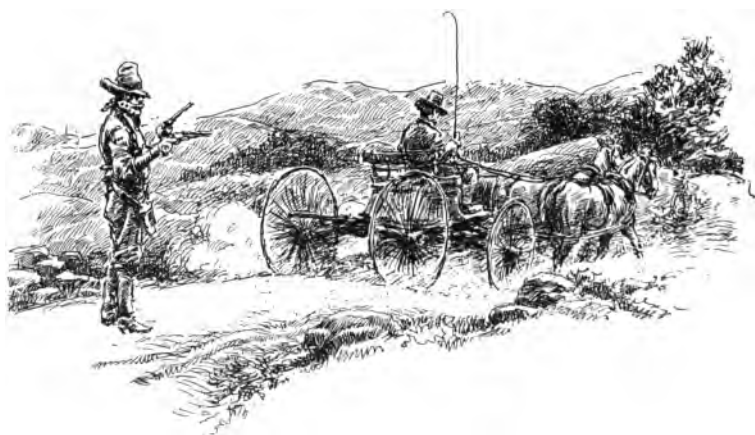
Pindar Peel took home Gabe Struthers;  
Treadwell went with his two brothers,  
Hardly knowin' which fr'm t' others,  
Which was like me — an' some others.

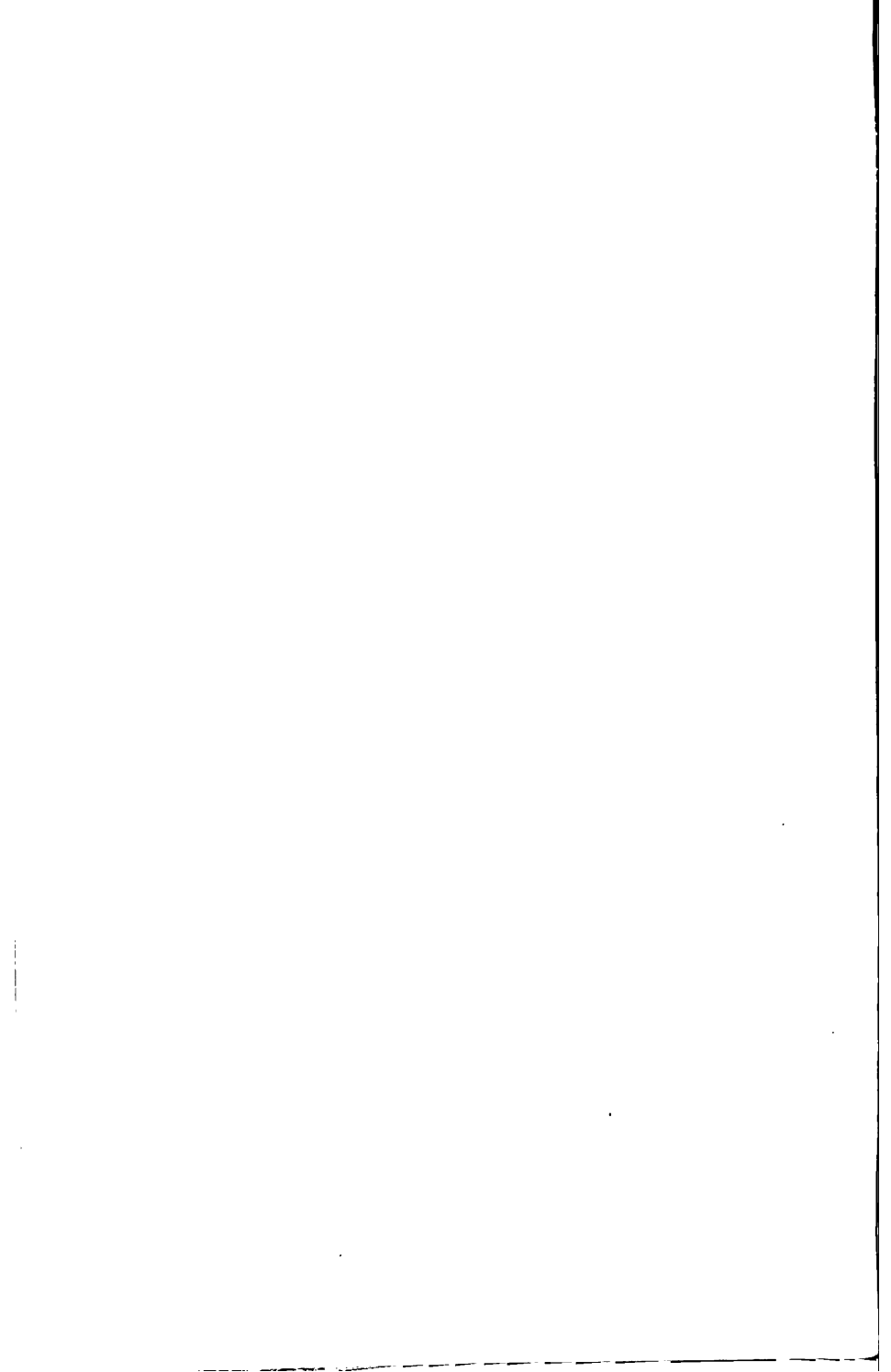
Nex' day Pindar heerd fr'm Struthers'  
Wife, an' Blake's an' Job Caruthers',  
Treadwell Pew's an' his two brothers',  
Mine — an' mebbe fr'm some others.

Pindar writ a note an' sent it,  
Beggin' pardon — an' he meant it;  
Said th' was no harm intended,  
Said them apples had fermented.

Treadwell Pew an' his two brothers,  
Homer Blake an' Job Caruthers  
Took probation — an' Gabe Struthers,  
Me an' half a dozen others.

He gits snubbed by everybody  
(Female sect) in Passamquoddy,  
Jest fer makin' birthday todody,  
Pindar Peel, of Passamquoddy.





## SHOOTING UP LANIGAN'S

**H**E blowed inter Lanigan's, swingin' a gun,  
An' swearin',  
Declarin'  
Red rivers 'u'd run  
Down Alkali Valley an' oceans o' gore  
'U'd wash sudden death on th' sage-brushy shore,  
An' shot a big hole inter Lanigan's floor.

He blowed inter Lanigan's, swingin' a gun,  
A new one,  
A blue one,  
A Colt's forty-one;  
He shot some, permiskus, where Lanigan stood,  
An' would have put Lanigan in bad fer good,  
But th' leg that he happened t' shoot in was wood.

He blowed inter Lanigan's, shoutin' like mad,  
An' ravin',  
Gun-wavin',  
Gin-ugly an' bad;  
He shot a knot hole outen Lanigan's leg,  
Th' wood one — an' shot th' bung outen a keg,  
An' nigh let th' liquor all out, every dreg.

6 SHOOTING UP LANIGAN'S

An' Lanigan, secin' him goin' too far,  
Too frisky,  
(With whiskey  
Wuth cash at th' bar),  
Reached over an' pulled out a big forty-four,  
An' plugged him between th' back bar an' the door,  
Till he was less harmful than he was before.

He blowed inter Lanigan's, lookin' for gore,  
An' tarried;  
We carried  
Him out on a door;  
An' Lanigan took a big splinter o' leg  
An' got out his jackknife an' whittled a peg  
To stop up th' hole he shot inter th' keg!

## WHY THE JURY DISAGREED

**I** AM an honest man, I am; ez fair ez a man  
kin be,  
Fer anything that's on th' square, I'm willin'  
to agree,  
But when I'm right, no set o' men kin argify with  
me.

I heerd th' witnesses myself an' I heerd th' lawyers,  
too;  
I heerd th' jedge's charge, 'y jing, that some of 'em  
slept right through,  
An' that man, he wa'n't guilty, sir, no more 'n me  
er you.

Now, what's th' use t' argify when y' know right  
where ye 're at?  
If my mind's made up, 'y jing, I'll stay, y' kin bet  
yer Sunday hat;  
When y' can't git nothin' in th' draw, my doctern  
is, stand pat.

Ten of 'em stood for th' feller's guilt on th' fust  
vote, instantly;  
One of 'em voted his ballot blank an' th' other one  
was me,



## 8      WHY THE JURY DISAGREED

An' of all th' stubborn, senseless mules, I swan I  
never see!

I 'low I know what's evidence, an' I got some slight  
idee

Of law myself, though I don't perfess to be no  
LL.D.

But th' ain't no 'leven men on airth kin bulldoze  
Silas Lee.

They argified an' argified, with now an' then a  
swear;

I set an' listened to 'em talk an' never turned a hair,  
Fer when I tired o' hearin' 'em, I jes' played soli-  
taire.

Thank Heaven I ain't no stubborn fool; I got some  
common sense;

I take my law fr'm th' jedge, 'y jing, an' I sift th'  
evidence,

But when it comes to my idees, wal, I ain't on th'  
fence.

They all got middlin' temperish when th' courthouse  
clock struck nine,

But nary a one of 'em guv' in, clear down th' stub-  
born line,

They jes' adhered to their idees an' I adhered t'  
mine.

WHY THE JURY DISAGREED 9

John Scruggs, he 'lowed t' calcate the jury orto  
rise,

He had some chores t' do at hum an' he said he'd  
compermise,

An' I said I'd stay till they let him off — er th'  
stars fell fr'm th' skies.

'Twas 'long 'bout midnight time, I guess; I'd beat  
my sixteenth game

O' solitaire, an' th' light burned dim with a sickly  
sort o' flame,

When Jason Benson up an' 'lowed how I was all t'  
blame!

I riz right up fr'm off my cheer an' fetched him one  
so free

That I 'low y' couldn't count th' stars that Jason  
Benson see,

An' Jason's cousin (through his first wife) he tuk a  
smash at me!

We mixed it purty middlin' warm; Wash Jenkins,  
he struck out

At Jason's cousin (through his first wife) an' fetched  
him sech a clout

That his nose was flatter 'n griddle-cakes, an' th'  
blood jes' spurted out.

Hamp Hawkins slid down underneath th' table —  
Hamp was slim —

10      WHY THE JURY DISAGREED

But someone guv' th' lamp a shove an' overturned  
th' glim,  
Hamp's clothes tuk fire fr'm th' kerosene an' durn  
nigh finished *him*.

Win Watson mounted of a cheer an' jes' begin t'  
shout  
"Peace! Peace!" when Jason Benson he fetched  
him a rousin' clout  
That laid Win len'thwise on th' floor, knocked  
plumb, completely out!

Then Scruggs he laid a-holt o' me, an' Jason grabbed  
my throat,  
Both holdin' on so cussed tight I couldn't peel my  
coat,  
An' Jason's cousin (through his first wife), he says:  
"Let's take a vote!"

Then all of 'em voted fer his guilt — every las'  
one but me;  
They never had no notion 't all of tryin' to agree,  
So I went back t' solitaire, fer y' can't bluff Silas  
Lee.

Now that's th' livin', gospel truth, fer any man t'  
read,  
It ain't fixed up t' favor me, an' it ain't no lyin'  
screed;  
Ez fur ez I'm consarned, 'y jing, th' jury *was*  
agreed!

## A HORSE TRADE

“HELLO!” says I.  
“Hello!” says he.  
I never see th’ man afore.  
“Swap?” says I.  
“Dunno,” says he,  
“Mebbe, mebbe — I ain’t shore.”  
“Th’ bay?” says I.  
“Th’ gray?” says he.  
“Swap!” says we, an’ both unhitched.  
“Fine horse,” says I.  
“O’ course,” says he,  
An’ in a minute we had switched.

“Git up!” says I.  
“Git up!” says he.  
An’ both them horses stood stock still!  
“Balk?” says I.  
“Yep!” says he.  
“Mine too!” s’ I, laughin’, fit to kill.  
“Say!” says I.  
“Hey?” says he.  
“Guess that’s horse apiece,” says we.  
“Good day!” says I.  
“Good day!” says he.  
Best joke, b’ gosh, I ever see!

## PLAIN BOB AND A JOB

**B**OB went lookin' for a job —  
Didn't want a situation; didn't ask a lofty  
station;  
Didn't have a special mission for a topnotcher's  
position;  
Didn't have such fine credentials — but he had the  
real essentials —  
Had a head that kept on workin' and two hands  
that were not shirkin';  
Wasn't either shirk or snob;  
Wasn't Mister — just plain Bob,  
Who was lookin' for a job.

Bob went lookin' for a job;  
And he wasn't scared or daunted when he saw a  
sign — “Men Wanted.”  
Walked right in with manner fittin' up to where the  
Boss was sittin',  
And he said: “My name is Bob, and I'm lookin'  
for a job;  
And if you're the Boss that hires 'em, starts 'em  
workin' and that fires 'em,  
Put my name right down there, Neighbor, as a  
candidate for labor;  
For my name is just plain Bob,

And my pulses sort o' throb  
For that thing they call a job."

Bob kept askin' for a job,  
And the Boss, he says: "What kind?" And  
Bob answered: "Never mind;  
For I ain't a bit partic'ler and I never was a stickler  
For proprieties in workin'—if you got some labor  
lurkin'  
Anywhere around about kindly go and trot it out.  
It's a job I want, you see —  
Any kind that there may be  
Will be good enough for me."

Bob was anxious for a job,  
And he said: "Look here, Old Feller — on the  
first floor, in the cellar,  
On the roof or in the attic — I'm a jobster demo-  
cratic.  
And it's all the same, Old Turk, what it is if it is  
work;  
I don't ask for frills upon it — I just want a job —  
doggone it!  
There's a fever in me rages  
For the thing that men call wages,  
Put me on the payroll pages!"

Well, sir, Bob he got a job.  
But the Boss went 'round all day in a dreamy sort  
of way;

And he says to me: " By thunder, we have got the  
world's Eighth Wonder!  
Got a feller name of Bob, who just asked me for a  
job —  
Never asks when he engages about overtime in  
wages;  
Never asked if he'd get pay by the hour or by the  
day;  
Never asked me if it's airy work and light and sani-  
tary;  
Never asked me for my notion of the chances of  
promotion;  
Never asked for the duration of his annual vacation;  
Never asked for Saturday half-a-holiday with pay;  
Never took me on probation till he tried the situa-  
tion;  
Never asked me if it's sittin' work or standin', or  
befittin'  
Of his birth and inclination — he just filed his appli-  
cation,  
Hung his coat up on a knob,  
Said his name was just plain Bob —  
And went workin' at a job! "

## A JUSTIFIABLE REBUKE

**W**E was twenty days from Deadwood,  
headed for th' Big Missouri,  
We had lost th' trail completely an' our  
grub was all run out;

Snow was knee-deep on th' level, with a wind that  
blew like fury,

An' with not a deer, a buffler or a bit o' game  
about;

"Texas" Follis killed a coyote an' we ate it up  
for dinner.

It was young an' tender pickin', but it didn't last  
th' bunch

Quite as long as we expected; an', as I'm a wicked  
sinner,

We ate it at one sittin' without leavin' none for  
lunch.

We had pitched a camp, despairin', in a bit o'  
sheltered holler,

We had give up hope o' livin' an' had turned our  
hosses loose;

We was burnin' up our saddles in an old-time buffler  
waller,

An' was prayin' somethin' handsome — but it  
didn't seem much use;



We was chewin' boots an' leggin's, which as nourishment was slender;

We had et our caps an' mittens, which was creatures of th' past,

An' was lookin' through our beddin' for a blanket that was tender

For a tabble-doty dinner, which we thought would be our last.

I was tightenin' my belt up, after forty hours o' fastin',

When "Smoke" Allister, he ast me if my mother used t' roast

Turkey with a ches'nut dressin', an' he follered up by astin'

If I liked baked sweet potaters or th' Irish kind th' most!

He said he could remember th' mince pie an' apple brandy

That they used to have for dessert, an' th' puddin' after that;

An' though I was weak I hit him with th' first thing that came handy —

Hit him with intent to harm him; an' I knocked him cold an' flat.

I'm a peaceful-minded feller, but I hit him somethin' awful!

Th' boys stopped eatin' harness for a minute to ast why,

THE  
FUNDING



An' when I had explained it they agreed that it was  
lawful,

Justifiable an' proper, as they bandaged up his  
eye;

I was chewin' on a buckle at th' time he made his  
sallies

About turkey an' plum puddin', an' I give him a  
new scar,

An' when he come to I told him that I didn't bear no  
malice,

But there's such a thing as carryin' a feller's  
joke too far!

## DON' WANT TO STAY

**J**ES' don' seem I want to stay  
Sence she went away.  
Jes' don' seem as if I care —  
Everything seems bare  
An' empty now, an' so I say  
Jes' don' seem I want to stay.

Sun shines, bird songs in th' air,  
Jes' don' seem I care.  
All th' music o' th' spring  
Don' seem anything.  
Used to love it, but today  
Jes' don' seem I want to stay.

Walkin' roun' th' field today,  
Don' look th' same way;  
Cattle lowin', crop to spare,  
Jes' seems I don' care.  
Scent o' flowers an' new cut hay,—  
Jes' don' seem I want to stay.

Used to like to hear th' breeze  
Rustlin' through th' trees;  
Thought th' grass a-growin' green  
Purtiest thing I seen.  
All changed sence she went away,  
Jes' don' seem I want to stay.

## DROPPING PEBBLES IN THE STREAM

**D**ROP a pebble in th' water — jes' a splash  
an' it is gone,  
But th's half a hundred ripples circlin' on,  
an' on, an' on,

Spreadin', spreadin' from th' center, flowin' on out  
to th' sea,

An' th' ain't no way o' tellin' where th' end is goin'  
to be.

Drop a pebble in th' water — in a minute ye forget,  
But th's little waves a-flowin' an' th's ripples circlin'  
yet;

All th' ripples flowin', flowin', to a mighty wave hev'  
grown,

An' ye've disturbed a mighty river — jes' by  
droppin' in a stone.

Drop an unkind word or careless — in a minute it  
is gone,

But th's half a hundred ripples circlin' on, an' on,  
an' on.

Th' keep spreadin', spreadin', spreadin' from th'  
center as th' go,

An' th' ain't no way to stop 'em, once ye've started  
'em to flow.

Drop an unkind word or careless — in a minute ye  
forget,

20 DROPPING PEBBLES IN STREAM

But th's little waves a-flowin' an' th's ripples circlin'  
yet;

An' perhaps in some sad heart a mighty wave of  
tears ye've stirred,

An' disturbed a life 'et's happy when ye dropped an  
unkind word.

Drop a word o' cheer an' kindness — jes' a flash an'  
it is gone,

But th's half a hundred ripples circlin' on, an' on,  
an' on,

Bearin' hope an' joy an' comfort on each splashin',  
dashin' wave,

Till ye wouldn't b'lieve th' volume o' th' one kind  
word ye gave.

Drop a word o' cheer an' kindness — in a minute  
ye forget,

But th's gladness still a-swellin' an' th's joy a-circlin'  
yet;

An' ye've rolled a wave of comfort whose sweet  
music can be heard

Over miles an' miles o' water — jes' by droppin' a  
kind word.

## THE MORTGAGED FARM

**G**OIN', goin', goin',— gone! Mother, dear,  
don't cry;  
Th' old home's passed t' other hands, but  
mebbe, by an' by,  
We may save an' buy another, though no place'll  
ever be  
As dear as this one that we've lost has been t' you  
an' me.  
Goin', goin', goin'— gone! Mother, come away;  
Th' ol' farm's been knocked down an' sold — it does  
no good t' stay;  
We've tried our best t' save it, but it wasn't ordered  
so.  
It ain't our home no longer — Mother, dear, le's  
go!

I don't know as I ever see th' ol' farm look so fine.  
Never see a deeper green on every shrub an' vine.  
Clover blossoms never smelled so fresh an' sweet,  
somehow,  
Lilacs never grew so thick, it seems, as th' do now;  
The ol' white house with its green blinds, the wood-  
bine creepin' on,  
'Twon't do no harm, I guess, t' take a las' look 'fore  
we're gone.



Tried our best t' pay th' debt, we did, th' Lord mus'  
know,  
But somehow couldn't make it quite — Mother,  
dear, le's go.

Goin', goin', goin'— gone! I seem t' hear it yet;  
Seem t' hear the auctioneer — my eyes somehow get  
wet;

Gone t' pay th' mor'gagee, an' we are crowded out.  
Gone! So many things are gone that folks don't  
think about.

Every blade o' grass an' tree, every foot o' ground  
Has some hauntin' memory, some sweetness clingin'  
'round,

Some memory for you an' me, that other folks don't  
know;

It seems somehow the're speakin' now — Mother,  
dear, le's go.

Goin', gone! We couldn't save it, Mother, dear;  
we tried,

But everything went criss-cross — th' cows took sick  
an' died,

We had to sell th' horses — th' farmin' didn't pay,  
An' troubles sort o' double-quickd — sometimes  
the' come that way.

Goin', gone! Th' pasture lands; th' dairy house  
beside

Th' brook; the first house that we built, where Sue  
and Johnny died.



1912

T' other folks it's simply losin' of a bit o' land,  
But the's a loss t' you an' me that they can't under-  
stand.

Goin', goin', goin'— gone! I wonder what's th' use  
Twinin' heartstrings 'round an' 'round jes' t' tear  
'em loose.

Goin', gone! Th' way o' life; why, th' good Lord  
knows;

Buildin' up for years an' years, an' then away it  
goes!

Hopes or homes, it's jes' th' same — what we build  
about,

Other hands mus' reap th' fruits an' we are crowded  
out;

Story always jes' th' same, fr'm th' light o' dawn

T' th' twilight's mist an' shade — hopes goin',  
goin', gone.

## 'NOUGH FOR ME

**S**OMETIMES I think I'll thrash him,  
good,  
He needs it bad, I'm sure;  
An' sometimes — well, I b'lieve I would,  
'N' then I can't endure  
T' tech th' 'musin' little kid,  
For when he smiles, y' see,  
He looks jes' like his mother did,  
An' that's enough for me.

I guess a hundred times or more  
I've taken him inside  
Th' bedroom there, an' closed th' door  
An' tried an' tried an' tried  
T' bring myself to strike him, once,  
Jes' once — an' then I see  
His mother's smile on his wet face,  
An' that's enough for me.

First thing I know I'm sittin' there  
Pettin' th' little chap,  
An' strokin' of his curly hair,  
Holdin' him in my lap,  
An' dreamin' of her — seein' her  
Jes' as she used to be,





An' somethin' makes my eyes t' blur,  
An' me cry silently.

He's got th' same brown eyes she had,  
An' th' same silky hair;  
Looks so like her, th' little lad,  
That — well, I jes' don' dare  
To lay a finger rough on him;  
'T 'd almos' seem as though  
I was a-bein' harsh to her,  
An' so I let him go.

He ain't a bad boy — no, he ain't,  
Jes' mischievous, that's all.  
In all his makeup th' ain't a taint  
O' meanness — an' I call  
T' mind when things she used to do  
Exactly like he does,  
I thought was jes' th' cutest an'  
Th' dearest ever was.

Y' know sometimes he'll come t' me,  
An' say to me: "Say, Dad,  
Y' ain't goin' to whip me, now, are ye?  
I ain't been very bad."  
An' then he'll twist, an' sort o' smile;  
My eyes get blurred and dim;  
Th' ain't enough gold in th' world  
T' hire me t' tech him.



## 'NOUGH FOR ME

Folks say I'm spoilin' him; may be  
I am, but I don't dare  
T' tech him rough — he looks like she  
Did, an' so I don't care.  
He puts his little arms aroun'  
My neck, an' I can see  
Her in his eyes, so big an' brown,  
An' that's enough for me.

## AN ART CRITICISM

**A** RAGGED kid in a torn straw hat,  
With his hair stuck through, an' a  
sassy smile,  
An' one suspender 'crost, like that —  
Wal — it may be art, but it ain't my style.

Diggin' th' sand with his bare big toe,  
An' a big loose patch sewed to his knee;  
Shovin' his hands in his pockets — so!  
Why they call that art, dogged ef I see.

Why, th' little runt 'et's painted there,  
With his eyes half closed, an' winkin' down,  
Th' sassy little rat, I swear  
I've seen him, right in my own town.

Them funny freckles, big an' brown,  
'N' them ragged pants an' that torn straw hat —  
I bet I kin find, right in our town,  
A dozen kids 'et look like that.

Why, sho! I've caught more kids like that  
In th' limbs o' my own apple tree,  
Lookin' out under that ol' straw hat,  
An' winkin' sassy down at me.

Th' little scamp! I kin almost hear  
Him say: "Hev' an apple, Dad," an' throw  
One down an' ketch me on th' ear!  
Why they call that art, dogged ef I know.

An' th' goldarned thing! A city chap  
Come along an' paid five hundred cold  
Fer it, an' thought he had a snap.  
I had t' laugh 't how he got sold.

A ragged kid in a torn straw hat,  
Like I've seen a hundred times, I bet;  
An' payin' out that much fer that!  
B' gosh, th' fools ain't all dead yet!

## STUBBED HIS TOE

**D** ID ye ever pass a youngster 'et 'd been an'  
stubbed his toe,  
An' was cryin' by th' roadside sort o' quiet  
like an' slow,  
A-holdin' of his dusty foot, all hard an' brown an'  
bare,  
An' tryin' to keep fr'm his eyes th' tears that's  
gatherin' there?  
Ye hear him sort o' sobbin' like, an' snufflin' of his  
nose,  
Ye stop an' pat his head an' some way try t' ease  
his woes;  
Ye treat him sort o' kind like, an' th' fust thing that  
y' know  
He's up an' off an' smilin'— clean forgot he stubbed  
his toe.

'Long th' road o' human life ye see a fellow travelin'  
slow,  
An' like as not ye'll find he's some poor chap that's  
stubbed his toe.  
He was makin' swimmin' headway, but he bumped  
into a stone,  
An' his friends kep' hurryin' onward an' they left  
him here alone.

He ain't sobbin' er ain't sniffin'— he's too old for  
tears an' cries,  
But he's grievin' jes' as earnest, ef it only comes in  
sighs;  
An' it does a heap o' good, sometimes, to go a little  
slow,  
To say a word o' comfort to th' man that's stubbed  
his toe.

Ye're never sure yerself, an' th' ain't no earthly way  
t' know  
Jes' when it's goin' t' come yer time t' trip an' stub  
yer toe;  
Today ye're smilin', happy, in th' bright sun's heat  
an' glow,  
Tomorrow ye're a-shiverin' as ye're trudgin' through  
th' snow.  
Jes' when ye think ye got th' world th' fastest in yer  
grip  
Is th' very time, ye'll find, 'et ye're th' likeliest t'  
slip;  
'N' it's mighty comfortin' t' have some fellow stop,  
I know,  
An' speak t' ye an' kind o' help ye when ye've stubbed  
yer toe.

## FRIENDS

**T**HE'S a little touch o' winter in th' air,  
The's leaves a-droppin', droppin' every-  
where,  
The's gusts o' snow a-blowin',  
But the's evergreen a-growin',  
Lookin' fresher 'n brighter 'n ever,  
Jes' to show 'et th' ain't never  
Any time when all th' trees is stripped an' bare.

The's a little touch o' trouble in th' air,  
The's friends a-droppin', droppin' everywhere,  
But the's some 'et's clingin' faster,  
Even when ye've met disaster,  
Jes' to show 'et th' ain't ever  
Any trouble 'et can sever  
Friends 'et's evergreen — th' kind o' friends 'et's  
rare.

## TABBY TATTLE READS THE NEWS

“**S**O Lidy Thomas wants a girl f'r house-  
work! Well, I do declare  
That woman never keeps one more'n two  
weeks! Somethin' wrong up there!  
I heerd her las' girl tellin' how she didn't git enough  
to eat,  
But that was only servants' talk — sech gossip as I  
won't repeat!  
An' Lucy Brown is gone to teachin' music down at  
Bridger's Dell  
An' quit the church as organist! Well, I allow it's  
just as well,  
From what I've heerd about her bein' mighty sweet  
on Parson Brooks,  
An' him a married man! I say there's danger in too  
much good looks!

“Joe Gudger's married! Well, I vow if sech  
rapscallious folks as him  
Can find a partner f'r their joys my chances ain't  
so mighty slim!  
Close! Why, his first wife's sister says she'll swear  
it with her dyin' breath  
Joe Gudger was so stingy that his first wife simply  
starved to death!

TABBY TATTLE READS NEWS 33

Another party up at Blake's! My, how some folks  
can put on airs  
An' snub their betters puzzles me! Why, Toby  
Toser's clerk declares  
They owe f'r three months' groceries — they never  
pay and never will;  
An' Toby's wore a pair o' shoes out goin' up to git  
th' bill!

“Jane Hitchcock an' that gawky Burns hev' gone  
an' married! Well, I do  
Declare it's time he popped to her if ever he in-  
tended to!  
He's been her stiddy beau eight years an' but f'r Jim  
Burns I allow  
She might 'a' been a happy wife an' had a family  
by now!  
An' Ezry Cowles 's got th' grip! Well, if it cost  
a cent t' git  
Y' can mark down that Ezry Cowles 'd be a long  
time gittin' it!  
There's only one thing that would tempt that man  
t' quit this life o' sin,  
An' that would be a cut-rate sale on coffins, with a  
hearse throwed in.

“Lem Wilson's addin' to his house! I wonder  
where poor Lem'll git  
Th' cash. Ain't got th' mor'gage paid he had to  
put on t'other, yit.



34      TABBY TATTLE READS NEWS

Now that's what comes fr'm weddin' style; Lem was  
a thrifty, savin' soul

Until he married that Sue Clay, an' she's just goin'  
through him whole!

Tod White is dead. Poor Tod! His chance o'  
reachin' Heaven 's mighty slim,

But bein' as he's dead I won't be one to say no bad  
of him.

Th' paper's sort o' runnin' down, at least accordin'  
to my views;

I don't know as I ever see th' Weekly with so little  
news."

## JEM WILLETS' LUCK

**J**EM WILLETS was here when th' land was  
all slough  
Where th' depot is now an' th' railroad runs  
through;  
He owned a hull forty o' townsite, by gum,  
An' let it all go fer th' taxes, I vum!  
He could have bought Perkins' Addition, I guess,  
Fer twenty-five dollars, an' mebbe fer less;  
An' he was once offered th' hull block of land  
Fer a span o' gray mules, where th' court-house 'll  
stand!

Jem Willets says somehow it's always his fate  
To be too durn early or else be too late;  
Th' steam cars stop now on th' way goin' through  
Where he used t' cut hay 'fore they drained out th'  
slough.

Jem Willets says nobody'd ever have thought  
A depot 'd be built on so durn wet a spot;  
An' he let it go fer a song, an' I vow  
She's wuth nigh a thousand an acre right now!

Jem Willets, he says where th' school board has  
bought  
Was offered t' him fer two dollars a lot,

An' sold fer two thousand th' week before last,  
Which runs inter profit, Jem says, purty fast.  
Ef he'd only known what th' future 'd bring  
He'd be wuth a million this minute, by jing!  
'Cuz land sells today fer a thousand a lot  
That might 'a' been Jem's jist as easy as not!

“Who'd ever 'a' thought,” says Jem Willets t' me,  
“They'd be sech a town where jist land used t' be?”  
It makes him disgusted when he sees a bank  
Where he used t' fill up his old water-tank.  
It jist goes t' show that there ain't nothin' fair  
About life at all, an' th' feller that's square,  
An' don't want it all, he jist stays where he is,  
While schemers git money that orter be his!

## FRIENDS NO LONGER

**T**HEY used t' be friends, jist as close as  
could be,

But one had a bay that could go in 2 :03 —  
So he said, an' he could — fer a quarter, I guess;  
But somethin' was wrong with his wind, which was  
less

Than a trotter's should be; an' one had a gray  
That was toppy an' fast, but got spavined someway;  
So they traded — both honest enough, I allow.  
An' they used t' be friends, but they ain't speakin'  
now.

They used t' be friends — jist as thick as two peas  
In a pod — an' got on jist as fine as y' please;  
But one had a maid who was precious as pearl,  
What wimmen 'll call an unusual girl!  
An' one day she quit — wouldn't work any more —  
But went to th' other fer five dollars more;  
All honest enough — jist a chance, I allow.  
An' they used t' be friends, but they ain't speakin'  
now.

They used t' be friends, an' they hardly could bear  
Fer one to be somewhere an' t'other not there;  
They talked it all over an' fixed up t' stay

Th' heat of th' summer up Blue Mountain way;  
So one took her children an' t'other took hern,  
An' lived in one cottage all summer t' learn  
A lesson that's old as th' hills, I allow.  
An' they used t' be friends, but they ain't speakin'  
now.

They used t' be friends, an' they lived right nex'  
door  
To each other, an' set a remarkable store  
By each other fer years, an' had never a spat  
Till one bought a bulldog an' one bought a cat;  
An' one day the cat turned up half tore in two.  
So somebody doctored a soup-bone an' threw  
It across to th' dog — fair enough, I allow.  
An' they used t' be friends, but they ain't speakin'  
now.

## A MATTER OF CHANCE

**B**UD HAWKINS jist sold out his onions, by  
gum!  
Fer six hunderd dollars an acre, I vum;  
He planted 'em careful an thinned 'em by hand  
An' paid with one crop fer nigh half of his land.  
An' Jem Willets heerd it an' said that las' spring  
He made up his mind that he'd grow some, by jing!  
An' was jist about to go at it — an' then  
He got plumb knocked out by lumbago again.

Bud Hawkins jist cut his alfalfy an' says  
He's got nigh four tons to th' acre, he guess;  
His sheep's rollin' fat an' he turned off some lambs,  
An' his hogs brung ten cents t' make special fine  
hams.

An' Jem Willets heerd it an' said he had thought  
Of plantin' alfalfy an' picked out th' spot,  
An' jist on th' day he had picked out, las' spring,  
To plant it, she rained — an' he couldn't, by jing!

Bud Hawkins turned over a forty of land  
An' made a cold thousand 'thout turnin' a hand;  
It jist went a-beggin' till Bud bought th' slice  
From Homer Gray's widder an' paid her own price.  
An' Jem Willets heerd it — said he had his eye

On that very piece an' was goin' t' buy  
It himself; an' was goin' t' see Widder Gray —  
But his old mare took lame an' he couldn't that day.

Bud Hawkins' young turkeys dressed heavy as lead  
An' brung him nigh on to three dollars a head;  
An' Elmer Dow bought 'em fer cash at his store —  
So True Perkins tol' me — an' wished he had more.  
An' Jem Willets said he was goin' t' set  
Some turkeys las' spring, but his hay was all wet  
When he went t' make nests, an' he let it go by —  
An' clean plumb forgot it when it come on dry!

## WHEN THE DUCKS COME DOWN

**W**HAT'S this message through the North-  
land from the Lord of living things  
That is whispered in the quiver of a hun-  
dred million wings,  
Edged with green and tipped with purple? How,  
all day, the dripping seal  
Sees the rise of stately mallard, hears the whirr of  
darting teal!  
How the Lord of living creatures bids these  
burnished wings be spread  
Over all the frozen Northland, with the gray sky  
overhead,  
When October wears a gown stitched with purple,  
edged with brown!  
When the frost gleams in the stubble — how the  
ducks come down!

When the copse is dun and leafless, and the mist is  
gray and chill,  
When the promise of the winter garbs the field and  
vale and hill;  
When October, sere and sober, with her bitter tears  
of rain,  
Mourns the red leaves and the yellow that her gusts  
sweep down the lane —



## 42 WHEN THE DUCKS COME DOWN

Then, across the great, gray, dripping, sodden  
canopy of sky,  
Sweep the winged hosts of Northland where the  
open waters lie.

When the chill of near November lies upon the field  
and town

Gleams the campfire's glowing ember — and the  
ducks come down.

And all day among the rushes and the nodding reeds  
he stands —

He who knows and times their coming — with that  
weapon in his hands

Whence the echoes of Death's message break the  
silences that brood,

Gray and heavy, like the mists that mark October's  
somber mood;

And all day are bright wings broken, till the  
crumpled bodies lie

Dead among the reeds and rushes, from the mist  
and gray of sky,

And the gamebag's overflowing — for October's  
sullen frown

Is the joy of dog and master — when the ducks  
come down.

Hear them chatter in the rushes when the dusk lies  
deep and damp;

When the shadow's in the stubble, where the dog and  
master tramp

WHEN THE DUCKS COME DOWN 43

Till a light gleams in the darkness where the supper-fire is made,  
And the ash logs snap and crackle where the frying-pan is laid.  
There's the bubble of the coffee; there's the sizzling in the flame,  
Where the bacon is awaiting its anointment of the game,  
And the birds grow crisp — delicious in their coloring of brown;  
For the time is near November — and the ducks come down!

## THE DOCTOR AT BAY

“**I**’VE given him pills,” said old Doc Squills,  
“And he’s taken a gross, I guess;  
And jalap and rhubarb and ipecac —  
But it’s puzzlin’, I confess.  
I’ve given him wine and syrup of pine  
And iron and calomel;  
And he takes it mild as a little child;  
But he don’t seem to get well!

“I blistered his back at the first attack  
And I greased his chest with lard;  
And I looked at his tongue and sounded his lung  
When I found him breathin’ hard.  
If I’ve written him one he’s had a ton  
Of prescriptions, I think.  
He’s had everything of a drug, by jing!  
That a mortal can eat or drink.

“I’ve given him more than an even score  
Of things for his appetite,  
And some of ’em may be wrong, but, say!  
Some one of ’em must be right!  
Why, a fellow ought, with the stuff he’s got,  
Be able to eat a horse;  
But his stomach’s weak and his manner’s meek,  
And drugs don’t have no force.



THE  
PUBLIC  
THE

“ I’ve given him a dose that’ll fetch nigh close  
Most any known disease;  
It’ll knock, by jing! most anything  
From a bilious spell to fleas;  
For it may be his stomach and maybe not,  
And it may be his spleen or gall;  
So I just wrote in some medicine  
That’d ought to hit ’em all!

“ He’s had morphine when his pain was keen  
And plenty of aconite;  
And digitalis whenever ’twas seen  
That his heart wasn’t workin’ right.  
He’s had his skin full of medicine  
Sence at least six weeks ago,  
Swallowed and hypo’d and some rubbed in;  
But he gets well awful slow!

“ So I’m just about clean plumb run out  
Of drugs and of idees, too;  
And everything’s been done, by jing!  
That a mortal man can do.  
And I can’t tell if he’s goin’ to get well,  
If he’s goin’ to live or die;  
But when it’s done I don’t want none  
To say Doc Squills don’t try! ”

## ART'S ATMOSPHERE

**S**HE paints a bit — seems sort o' queer,  
An' says th' artist's atmosphere  
Is what she needs. Don't want in mine  
No paintshop smells an' turpentine!  
An' as for atmosphere — why, say!  
When I get up at break o' day  
An' go to milk, I don't know how  
We'd beat the kind that we got now!

No atmosphere! Why, when th' spring  
Goes spillin' scent on everything,  
I wonder what she calls th' air  
That brings perfume from everywhere.  
Why, say! If she could paint some trees,  
An' make 'em rustle jist like these  
Big ellums here, Pierp Morgan, he  
Would have 'em in his gallery!

By jing, sometimes I wish that I  
Could paint a slice of sunset sky,  
Or, when th' harvest moon has riz,  
Could set her down jist as she is!  
I wish that I could paint th' breeze  
An' put th' twilight in th' trees;  
I bet I'd find, by jiminy,  
A-plenty atmosphere for me!

An' she says she needs color, too!  
Soul color! Says all artists do!  
An' every night th' moonlight shines  
On near-ripe corn an' pumpkin vines!  
An' all I have to do is look  
For silver spangles in th' brook.  
An' trees done rich in autumn brown  
An' in th' water upside down!

Why, moonlight on an apple tree  
A-blossom, 's good enough for me!  
An' brooks that go a-singin' through  
Th' woods, 's got soul enough for two!  
That old rail fence by moonlight — say!  
If I could paint it jist that way  
I'd have the artists all down here  
A-biddin' for my atmosphere!



## GREETINGS FOR TWO

**K**NOWED him more 'n twenty year',  
Liked him through an' through;  
Him an' me was neighbors here  
When th' land was new.

He druv' past here every day,  
Wave' his hand jes' so;  
Then he 'd holler, "Howdy!" an'  
I 'd holler back, "Hello!"

I 'd be workin' in th' field,  
He 'd be off to town;  
An' I 'd hear that rattle-wheeled  
Buggy comin' down;  
I 'd look up from hoein' corn,  
An' I 'd see him go;  
Then he 'd holler, "Howdy!" an'  
I 'd holler back, "Hello!"

Never was no other talk  
Had by him an' me;  
See him go by, trot er walk,  
Wave — an' let him be.  
Alwus knowed when I looked up  
Jest how it 'u'd go:  
He 'u'd holler, "Howdy!" an'  
I 'd holler back, "Hello!"





Say, I call *that* neighborin'  
In th' proper way;  
Ain't no kith o' mine er kin  
Fur as I kin say;  
Alwus friendly, cheery-like,  
Sunshine, rain, er snow,  
He jest hollers, "Howdy!" an'  
I holler back, "Hello!"

He 'ten's to his own affairs,  
An' I 'ten' t' mine;  
He don't put on any airs,  
I don't cut no shine;  
Weather bad er weather fair,  
Drivin' fast er slow,  
He jest hollers, "Howdy!" an'  
I holler back, "Hello!"

That's th' way we started out  
When we settled here;  
Like t' keep it up about  
'Nother twenty year',  
Look — out yonder in the road —  
There! Now see him go!  
Soon he 'll holler, "Howdy!" an'  
I 'll holler back, "Hello!"

## THE PENITENCE OF SAGEBRUSH NOBE

**H**E blew in one day from Red Horse,— cow-  
town fifty miles away,—  
Lookin' green as young alfalfa an' as ver-  
dant as new hay;

Slim an' awkward in his bearin', like some gawky  
farmer boy.

Said he 'd been a-tendin' cattle on a farm in Illinois.  
Tackled "Sage-brush" Nobe, the foreman of the  
Quarter-circle A,

For a job at breakin' bronchos. It was cattle-  
shippin' day,

An' the boys were busy loadin', but the laugh was  
loud an' clear,

When an Illinois calf-weaner talked of breakin'  
bronchos here.

"Sage-brush" Nobe was nigh a-splittin', but he  
never cracked a smile;

Kep' as sober as a deacon, but nigh bu'stin' all the  
while;

An' he saddled up Mazurka, fines' cow-horse in his  
class,

But as ornery a broncho as was ever fed on grass.  
Was n't nothin' in Montana that could touch the  
brute for speed,

PENITENCE OF SAGEBRUSH NOBE 51

But the roughest sort o' buckler that a mortal ever  
seed.

An' he got the kid to try him, an' he told him if he'd  
stay

He 'd be hired for breakin' bronchos for the Quarter-  
circle A.

So the boys stood there an' waited with a grim, un-  
holy joy

For Mazurka to make mincemeat of the jay from  
Illinois;

An' Mazurka did his blamedest, but the more he  
pitched an' tore,

The more the jay from Illinois stuck tighter than  
before.

An' Mazurka couldn't throw him, that was all there  
was to that;

So when he got tired pitchin', why, the jay just  
waved his hat.

The laugh he turned an' give us showed he was n't  
no green boy,

An' he was n't no calf-weaner from no farm in  
Illinois.

For he puts spurs to Mazurka an' the two of 'em  
was gone

Out of sight before a man of us could throw a saddle  
on;

He simply kep' a-goin', never swervin' from his  
course

52 PENITENCE OF SAGEBRUSH NOBE

Till he struck the Reservation, where he traded off  
the horse

For a wiry Injun pony an' a little cash to boot,  
When he headed for Wyomin', like a thievin', blame  
galoot.

An' the Red Horse Vigilantes said his name was  
Slippery Finn,  
'Bout as smooth an' slick a thief as ever pulled a  
picket-pin.

An' the Red Horse Vigilantes rode back cheated  
of their prey,

While Nobe cussed himself up thoughtful in an ear-  
nest Western way;

An' the little leather time-book allus carried by the  
Boss

Showed: "One bay horse, name Mazurka —  
charged to profit an' to loss."

Then Tex Jones, the cook, told Sage-brush oncet he  
baited up a trap

So 's to catch a thievin' coyote, but *his* leg caught  
in the snap;

An' the story's application was so clear an' plain to  
see,

Nobe says, "Boys, I s'pose it's liquor, an' the price  
of it's on me."

## HOW'S CROPS?

**J**ED HICKS he drives up Main Street and he  
drops  
In on Si Gregg; and Si Gregg says: "How's  
crops?"

And sometimes Jed says: "Si, I never see  
A crop like this one promises to be!"  
And orders big — all kinds of farm supplies,  
Till Si he gets real sunshine in his eyes  
And says to Emmet Pew, the drummer: "Pew,  
Make that one ton of sugar I said, two;  
And tell them hullsale fellers I'll discount  
Them bills of theirn and pay the hull amount."

And then Scrimp Short, the banker, he jest hops  
Acrost the street and says to Jed: "How's crops?"  
And Jed says to him: "Scrimp, she's goin' to be  
A bumper crop, I tell you — now you see!"  
And Scrimp he rubs his hands and feels his oats,  
And tells his customers he'll take them notes  
At nine per cent; and finds he's got about  
Another fifty thousand to let out;  
And thinks the notes can be renewed again  
For mebbe eight per cent instead of ten.

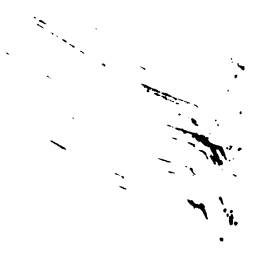


And old Doc Blake he sees Jed Hicks and slops  
Right through the mud and says to Jed: "How's  
crops?"

And Jed says: "Doc, I never see the beat  
Of this here year for corn and oats and wheat!"  
And Doc he smiles, because he's got about  
Five thousand on his books a-standin' out;  
So he goes to the garage and says: "Green,  
You better order me that new machine  
We talked about the other day"—and goes  
Into his tailor's for a suit of clothes.

Jed Hicks ain't much to look at, but his say  
Is purty powerful in a business way;  
And when he says the crop is hard to beat  
You see folks perk up all along the street.  
Si Gregg, he gives big orders for his store,  
And Scrimp Short finds he's got a-plenty more  
Good money to lend out; and everywhere  
You feel that easy-money-comin' air.  
It has some meanin' when Scrimp Short, he hops  
Acrost the street and says to Jed: "How's  
crops?"





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## THE ETERNAL QUESTION

**L**EM DREER keeps store where th' cross-roads meet,  
An' th' river's right clost by;  
He sets on a box in front, t' greet  
Them folks that happens nigh.  
But greetin's ain't whut they was one day,  
Nor mean whut they used t' mean;  
An' this is all he hears 'em say:  
"Hey! Got any gasoline?"

Folks used t' drive with a spankin' team  
An' take th' check reins down  
T' let 'em drink at a little stream  
Right here in th' heart o' town;  
An' Lem 'ud pass 'em th' time o' day  
An' gossip a bit between,  
But now it's a car, an' they holler an' say:  
"Hey! Got any gasoline?"

A feller would ride up a stylish hoss  
An' hitch to th' ol' hoss-rail,  
An' holler at Lem: "Hello, there, Boss!"  
An' give him a hearty hail.  
Now one o' them motor-bikers 'll gee  
An' fetch out an ol' canteen,

Er a pail er cup, an' he says, says he:

"Hey! Got any gasoline?"

An' they used t' row up to Lem's dock

With a yawl er a trim canoe,

An' ast of Lem whut he's got in stock

An' look th' hull store through.

Now one o' them motor boats 'll whiz

Where th' rushes grow all green,

An' they'll holler fr'm where th' landin' is:

"Hey! Got any gasoline?"

An' Hiram Griggs an' his big engine

With forty rod o' plows,

He comes explodin' down th' line

With grease on his chin an' brows;

An' he hollers at Lem fr'm th' ol' crossroads

Th' len'th of th' village green,

While that big engine of his explodes:

"Hey! Got any gasoline?"

Now they got an airline by Lem's store,

Where th' currents flow jest right,

An' a feller kin see th' airships soar

Way up, half out o' sight.

But they do drop in on Lem sometimes

An' swoop on him unseen,

An' down fr'm th' clouds some feller chimes:

"Hey! Got any gasoline?"

Lem's sellin' out his stock o' clothes  
An' groc'ries, less er more;  
He's movin' an' don't keer where he goes,  
But he's goin' t' run a store.  
He says he's goin' t' try t' find  
Some place with a change o' scene,  
An' git one question off'n his mind:  
"Hey! Got any gasoline?"

## THE TRAVAIL OF GROUCH

**O**L' GROUCH is afeard when it rains fer a  
spell  
Thet th' hull of his crop's goin' t' rot;  
An' ef she don't rain, it's quite easy t' tell  
She'll all shrivel fr'm bein' too hot.  
She burns ef it's dry an' she rots ef it's wet,  
Till it's jest one continual fight,  
An' they ain't any weather the've diskivered yet  
Thet ever jest suited him quite.

Ol' Grouch is afeard ef we have a wet spring  
Thet he can't git his seed in th' field;  
An' ef she's too dry it won't sprout anything,  
An' he won't git no average yield.  
Ef th' fall sh'd turn wet grain'll rot in th' stack,  
Er mildew, er else purty near;  
An' ef th' fall's dry then his chances is slack  
Fer gittin' a big crop next year.

Ol' Grouch says when weather is good fer th' corn  
Thet it's knockin' th' tar outen wheat.  
An' he says thet no feller was ever yet born  
Who's got this mixed farmin' game beat.  
Ef he's got a big crop, then th' market ain't right  
An' all of th' prices has fell,

An' when things are soarin' clear up out o' sight,  
 Why, he ain't got nothin' t' sell.

O! Grouch says it ain't his real natur' t' scold,  
 He's nachelly peart as a snipe;  
 But when th' hull summer's onusual cold,  
 How's anything goin' t' git ripe?  
 An' ef it turns hot, like some summers'll do,  
 With wind like a blast furnace breath,  
 How's any green thing goin' t' weather it through  
 Without bein' blistered t' death?

O! Grouch says sometimes he is tempted t' sell  
 His hull farm out jest fer a song,  
 But jest when that notion gits fixed purty well  
 Th' don't come no buyers along.  
 An' some days when buyers is thicker'n fleas  
 T' pay any price that he said,  
 It's one of them days that's nigh perfect — like  
 these,  
 An' th' notion's gone outen his head.



## POEM OF THE SHOWER

**T**H' rain-barrel fills an' overflows,  
An' th' water runs in frothy streams;  
Th' drops stand thick on bud an' rose,  
An' th' ol' slate barn roof shines an' gleams;  
Th' rooster drops his tail an' runs  
For th' carriage shed, an' th' limbs hang low,  
Th' thunder roars like far-off guns,  
An' it's fresh an' green down th' long corn row.

An' it's drip, drip, drip from th' ridge an' eaves;  
It's dash, dash, dash on th' window pane;  
It's swish, swish, swish in the ellow leaves,  
An' it's splash, splash, splash down th' muddy  
lane;  
Th' cows low soft in th' milkin' shed,  
An' th' plow horse steams where a nearby limb  
Spreads out its leaves above his head  
To keep th' rain drops off'n him.

An' ol' Doc Griggs goes tearin' past,  
A-splash, splash, splash with his big red roan,  
T' beat th' stork or to put a cast  
On a broken leg or t' splint a bone;  
Or p'raps Dad Sykes is tuck ag'in  
With his pleurisy or an azmy spell,





POEM OF THE SHOWER

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W'ich Doc can knock with a pint o' gin  
An' some epecac an' some calomel.

An' it's grease my boots so they won't shrink tight,  
An' it's read my Times an' let her come,  
For th' corn jist jumps when th' weather's right,  
An' I'm glad I ain't Doc Griggs, by gum,  
With his muddy wheels an' his big, red roan,  
An' his epecac an' his calomel,  
An' I'm glad it ain't my broken bone  
Or my pleurisy or my azmy spell!

## TELLIN' TH' GAL

**I**T was night in th' camp by th' ol' Dry Run,  
An' th' beef herd was bedded down;  
Bill Mullins, th' foreman, took off his gun  
An' looked at th' boys aroun';  
Then he looked at th' stars up in th' sky,  
An' fur off in th' chaparral,  
An' he heaved a hopeless, despairin' sigh,  
Sayin': "Who's goin' t' tell th' Gal?"

Y' c'd hear th' lowin' o' sleepy steers  
An' th' swish of th' wind in th' trees;  
An' th' mournful noises a feller hears  
On sorrerful nights like these;  
Fer under th' wagon th' shadders fell deep  
An' th' meanin' of 'em was grim,  
Fer a form was stretched out like a man asleep,  
With a blanket drawed over him.

Jest a few pine sticks in a dyin' blaze,  
Where th' supper fire still burned;  
An' th' flickers fell in a feller's face  
No matter which way he turned.  
"Hoss must a-r'ared on him an' broke his neck —  
Big ches'nut he called Ol' Pal."  
Bill Mullins sighed an' he dealt th' deck  
To see who 's t' tell th' Gal.

'Cuz th' feller had a ranch on th' Antelope Hide  
An' a Gal who was neat an' trim  
As a yearlin' doe, an' was jest a bride,  
Who was waitin' there fer him.  
An' he was under th' wagon there,  
Brung back fr'm th' chaparral,  
With his blue eyes fixed in a frightened stare,  
An' who's goin' t' tell th' Gal?

An' so by th' campfire's lights an' shades  
Bill dealt an' th' faced cards fell;  
An' th' feller t' draw th' Jack o' Spades  
Was th' feller 'et had t' tell.  
An' a hush like th' very chill o' death  
Fell on that circle o' Pards,  
While every feller held his breath  
An' follered th' fallin' cards.

A deuce an' a queen an' a seven an' tray,  
A king an' an ace an' a nine;  
A jack — an' black! — an' I turned pale gray,  
Fer I thought it was spades — an' mine!  
But I see it was clubs when I looked again,  
An' my breath came quick an' hard.  
Bill dealt 'em around again — an' then  
He says: "I've got th' card!"

An' after th' boys had all turned in  
An' after we'd mounted guard,

Bill Mullins set where th' fire had been,  
His face all weather scarred,  
An' tears in his eyes, an' he looked at th' sky,  
An' then out in th' chaparral,  
An' he cried: " Good Lord, come nigh! come nigh!  
'Cuz I've got to tell th' Gal! "

## SONG OF WHITE ROSES

**A** DOZEN roses fer ol' Doc Griggs,  
An' some fer his bay horse, too;  
Fer Doc wasn't none o' yer fussy prigs,  
But a man, clean through an' through;  
He jogged along in his easy way  
An' he smiled with a sunny smile,  
An' him an' that gig an' that dappled bay  
Went many a weary mile.

Say! He had a look that was medicine,  
An' a smile that was tonic, too;  
An' th' gloom cleared up when Doc came in  
With his cheery Howdy-do.  
An' he had a touch like an Angel's kiss  
That was cool an' soft an' kind —  
Say! Gi' me a dozen flowers like this,  
Th' sweetest that you can find.

Why, all th' childurn 'ud wave an' call  
An' toss him a kiss an' a smile;  
His heart was a place 'at 'ud hold 'em all,  
'Cause he knowed 'em all th' while  
Fr'm th' time they're born, an' they'd bring him  
flowers  
An' sugar fer that ol' bay —



Say, he was a man, he was, an' ours,  
Rain, shine, er night er day.

Why, he set more legs an' he cured more hives  
An' he knocked more rheumatiz,  
An' he druv' more miles an' he saved more lives!  
An' that great big heart o' his  
Was a place t' lay yer troubles down;  
An' charity! Why, say!  
I c'u'd buy nigh half of this county town  
With what he gave away!

Only a country doctor, hey?  
Well, God made th' country, sure;  
An' God made Doc jest that same way,  
Great big an' fresh an' pure;  
Say: Gi' me white roses — they'll match with him.  
Dadblame this ornery blur!  
Gittin' old, I guess, an' my eyes is dim;  
Bill, lend me yer handkercher!



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## THE GIANTS OF THE FARM

**H**ERE is a Poem for you: A dozen gangs o'  
plows,  
And a Tractor, strong as a troop o' horse  
and big as a rancher's house,  
Pullin' them gang plows after, an' breakin' th' sod  
that way,  
A dozen furrows instead o' one, an' acres of 'em a  
day!  
Th' pull of an iron giant, hitched up to a dozen  
shares,  
Rollin' on wheels as tall as me, an' turnin' sod every-  
wheres!  
A township of virgin prairie is nothin' at all t' plow  
With a Tractor strong as a troop o' horse, th' way  
they are doin' now!

Here is a Poem for you: A barrel of gasoline  
Fed into th' maw of an iron horse, an' a big-as-a-  
house machine  
Rollin' over a section of land, level as you can find,  
Leavin' a trail of sod broke up an' ready for seed  
behind!  
He grunts like a stubborn giant — a wheeze an' a  
snort an' a groan —

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But he's got the power of a troop o' horse, an' he  
pulls them plows alone.

He's made out o' b'iler metal and he isn't no shakes  
for speed,

But he's turnin' them acres over an' fittin' them for  
the seed!

Here is a Poem for you: Another man o' steel  
Scatterin' seed in th' furrows left after th' Tractor's  
wheel;

Tuckin' it in for sproutin', hidin' th' seed away,  
Droppin' it in with an iron hand — acres an' more a  
day!

An' here is the Reaper comin', metal an' wood an'  
blade,

Cuttin' the grain that ripens, an' leavin' it bound an'  
laid,

Ready for threshin' of it! An' a Thresher with  
band an' wheel

Flailin' it out with a giant's arms, muscled with  
bands o' steel!

Here is a Poem for you: A Tractor with many  
plows,

Strong with the power of a troop o' horse, and big  
as a rancher's house!

A Sower with iron fingers, where th' Ploughman  
turned th' sod;

An' then a Reaper comin' where the steel-shod Sower  
trod,

THE GIANTS OF THE FARM 69

With its sweep like a giant's sickle! An' th'  
Thresher with his flail  
Swung from his arms, steel-muscled; an' th' gleam  
of a steel-bound trail,  
With th' bread of th' World upon it, come down to  
th' ships at sea:  
Here's a Poem of Bread an' Steel an' Man — an'  
his Mastery!

## A PARTING

“**D**ON’ go, Bill, don’ go!  
I know it mus’ seem slow  
Here on th’ farm fer a boy like you;  
I know the’s many a chore to do;  
Not much in th’ way o’ company,  
’Cept what ye git from Ma an’ me;  
An’ it’s temptin’ to think o’ th’ world so wide,  
An’ all o’ th’ pleasures o’ life outside  
Our quiet little home life here;  
But, Bill, it’ll seem so hard an’ queer  
Fer Ma an’ me, as we allus do,  
Not to sit an’ feel so proud o’ you  
When we see you ’roun’. I know it’s slow,  
But, Bill, I wisht you wouldn’t go!

“ Don’ go, Bill, don’ go!  
Ma’s tears jes’ flow an’ flow  
When she’s packin’ up yer trunk — an’ I —  
Well, Bill, I ain’t much on th’ cry,  
But th’ ol’ man’s heart is heavy, Bill,  
The’s an achin’ there that won’t be still.  
Jim’s gone, an’ though a year’s gone by,  
It don’ seem right he had to die;  
Then Jack lef’ home, an’ Lou is wed,  
An’ mebbe even Jack is dead,

Fer we haven't heard a word from him.  
Bill! Bill! Our flock has grown so slim,  
Ye're all we've got now, Bill, an' so  
I jes' can't bear to let ye go!

“What d'ye say, Bill? Ye won't go!  
Boy, boy, ye'll never know  
What a load ye've raised f'rm th' ol' folks' heart,  
Fer we couldn't bear to see ye start.  
Come, here, Bill, let me hug ye once;  
Well, drat me fer a sneakin' dunce,  
If my blame ol' eyes ain't filled with tears,  
When I feel like whoopin' up with cheers.  
An' Bill, let's go tell Mother so,  
That her boy says he ain't goin' to go.”



## AN UP-COUNTRY FEUD

**I** AIN'T on good terms 'ith Wilson; he ain't on  
good terms 'ith me.  
Neighbored fer nigh onto ten years, friendly  
as friendly could be,  
An' then fell out over a horse trade, crooked as  
ever you see.

Wilson, he owned a big ches'nut trotter — a spankin'  
fine horse.  
Used to go splittin' th' breezes 'long of a quarter-  
mile course,  
Fine lookin' animal, Stranger; plenty o' gimp, speed,  
and force.

I had a pacer could go *some*; bright bay, almost a  
blood-red,  
Nobby an' stylish fer light work, groomed to a shine,  
an' well fed,  
But a durn nasty habit o' balkin', when th' notion  
got into her head.

Wilson druv' over one mornin', sez t' me, sez he,  
“ Say, Win,  
Wisht y'd come 'long 'ith yer stop-watch, held fer a  
quarter-mile spin.”

Had th' big ches'nut hitched up t' a road-cart an',  
sez he: "Jump in!"

Say! He showed speed fer that quarter! Fast as  
I ever see made!

"Wilson," sez I, "he's a winner; puts my bay horse  
in th' shade."

He sez to me, sez he: "Winston, how'd y' con-  
sider a trade?"

"I ain't a fast-horse man, Winston; I ain't jes'  
nachelly fit

T' own sech a stepper as this is; that is th' reason  
of it."

He talked so almighty hones' I thought that he  
was — an' I bit!

Seemed like a sin when I guv' him some cash an' that  
balky ol' bay;

Sort o' like robbin' th' feller — giving him swamp-  
grass fer hay;

But tradin' of horses is tradin' — an' that's about all  
there's t' say.

It happened in county-fair season; I druv' over there  
th' same day,

Entered my horse in th' races, chucklin' th' whole of  
th' way,

An' found when I got there that Wilson had entered  
th' race 'ith my bay.

He grinned when he see me a-comin' a-drivin' his  
ches'nut, an' I  
Fer th' life o' me couldn't help laughin' t' think o'  
th' fun, by an' by,  
When he druv' that ol' bay in th' races an' found  
out her weakness! My, my!

Nex' day when th' free-for-all started, my ches'nut  
shot into fust place,  
Went t' th' quarter like lightnin'— th' wa'n't nothin'  
else in th' race,  
Went at a two minute clip, sir, but couldn't stand up  
t' th' pace.

Fer when we got up t' th' quarter, my ches'nut went  
down on his knees,  
Gaspin' fer breath ev'ry minute, with an onhealthy  
sort of a sneeze.  
Wind-broken! Yes, sir, by thunder! Had a regu-  
lar wind-broken wheeze!

Mad! I was as mad as a hatter! Mad till I jes'  
couldn't talk.  
But I looked down th' track at th' starters, an' there  
stood th' bay at a balk,  
While a crow-bait from down in th' country was  
winnin' th' race in a walk.

I ain't on good terms 'ith Wilson; he ain't 'ith me,  
as y' see.

Neighbored fer nigh onto ten years, friendly as  
friendly could be.

He says I done *him* dirt in a horse trade; I say that  
*he* done it t' *me*.

## THE DIFFERENCE

**S**OMETIMES when Pa gets mad because  
I bust some of his household laws,  
He says: "Look here, you rascal,  
you,

I'll whale you, sir, that's what I'll do."  
An' Ma, she just turns up her nose,  
An' sits there in refined repose,  
An' higher still her nose she tilts;  
An' Pa don't lick me — he just wilts.

When Ma gets mad because I do  
Some little thing she said not to,  
She don't talk loud and wild like Dad,  
But just says: "Will, come here, my lad."  
An' Pa don't get no chance to tilt  
His nose — an' Ma, well, she don't wilt;  
She just leads Willie boy away  
Out to the shed and makes him lay  
Acrost her lap — seems just like play,  
'Cept Willie don't sit down that day.

## A WAYSIDE GREETING

**F**EELIN' purty happy — won't y' stop an'  
smile with me?

World is full o' sunshine if you'll only try t'  
see;

Never mind th' shadder that is hidden in th' grass,  
Sun 'll strike it by an' by an' all th' gloom 'll pass.  
Feelin' purty happy — for there's glory in th' morn,  
Rain is good for clover an' th' sun is good for corn,  
Roses on th' trellis an' a robin in th' tree,  
Feelin' purty happy — won't y' stop an' smile with  
me?

Feelin' purty happy — won't y' stop an' smile with  
me?

Road is long an' dusty an' my cup o' cheer is free;  
Let me loose your burden so y' rest a bit before  
Duty calls y' onward an' y' take it up once more;  
Water drippin' plenty down a hundred feet o' well,  
Splashin' fr'm th' bucket where y' cool y'r lips a  
spell,

Grass all cool an' shady underneath th' chestnut tree,  
Feelin' purty happy — won't y' stop an' smile with  
me?

Feelin' purty happy — won't y' stop an' smile with  
me?

You an' I are brothers, or at least we ought t' be;  
 Lord knows where we came from an' th' Lord knows  
 where we go,

Mebbe I can help you if you'll stop an hour or so.  
 Griefs are made for healin' of an' tears are made  
 t' dry,

Drop in here an' rest y' till th' shower passes by,  
 Put up an' be welcome at th' Inn o' Sympathy,  
 Feelin' purty happy — won't y' stop an' smile with  
 me?

Feelin' purty happy — won't y' stop an' smile with  
 me?

I'm just sort o' restin' by th' roadside, don't y' see;  
 Just a pilgrim passin' with a bit o' smile an' song,  
 Over th' same pathway that th's millions tramped  
 along.

I've just leased an acre, an' I've reared a bungalow,  
 Put some flowers near it, that will bloom a day or  
 so,

Tried t' make it homelike an' th' cheer of it is free,  
 Feelin' purty happy — won't y' stop an' smile with  
 me?

## “US CONSUMERS”

**E**ZRY Pembroke says, says he,  
He is chargin' more f'r tea  
Since th' freight rates riz, becuz  
Freight is higher 'n it wuz.  
Ezry says that him an' me  
Bears th' higher cost o' tea  
When he puts it on my bill,  
“An',” says he, “we allus will.”

Ezry Pembroke says hard facts  
Shows high tariff is a tax,  
An' the higher price an' sich  
All goes to th' robber rich;  
When they charge him more, why he  
Has to charge it up to me.  
“Us consumers pays th' bill,”  
Ezry says, “an' allus will.”

Ezry Pembroke says when his  
Hullsale price of goods is riz  
He jest charges up to me  
What th' extry cost'll be.  
Ezry says it's jest his aim  
To keep profits 'bout th' same.  
“Us consumers pays th' bill,”  
Ezry says, “an' allus will.”



## " US CONSUMERS "

Ezry says it's plain t' see  
How it's up to him an' me.  
When th' price of goods is riz  
He pays more an' more f'r his;  
An' he'll charge th' extry share  
Up to me t' make it fair.  
" Us consumers pays th' bill,"  
Ezry says, " an' allus will."

## UNDISMAYED

**H**E came up smilin'—used to say  
He made his fortune that-a-way;  
He had hard luck a-plenty, too,  
But settled down an' fought her through;  
An' every time he got a jolt  
He jist took on a tighter holt,  
Slipped back some when he tried to climb  
But came up smilin' every time.

He came up smilin'—used to git  
His share o' knocks, but he had grit,  
An' if they hurt he didn't set  
Around th' grocery store an' fret.  
He jist grabbed Fortune by th' hair  
An' hung on till he got his share.  
He had th' grit in him to stay  
An' come up smilin' every day.

He jist gripped hard an' all alone  
Like a set bull-pup with a bone,  
An' if he got shook loose, why then  
He got up an' grabbed holt again.  
He didn't have no time, he'd say,  
To bother about yesterday,  
An' when there was a prize to win  
He came up smilin' an' pitched in.

## UNDISMAYED

He came up smilin'— good fer him!  
He had th' grit an' pluck an' vim,  
So he's on Easy Street, an' durned  
If I don't think his luck is earned!  
No matter if he lost sometimes,  
He's got th' stuff in him that climbs,  
An' when his chance was mighty slim,  
He came up smilin'— good fer him!

## THE REFORMED

**I** JIST heered that Elder Gray  
Give his money all away!  
Been a miser, clost an' hard  
Sence th' big tree in our yard  
Wuz a saplin'—never went  
Nigh a soul or give a cent!  
Heered las' night he give his wife  
All he saved up all his life!

Sounds onreal, but 'taint no lie —  
I jist seen th' hearse go by!

I jist heered that Jimmy Green  
Quit his drinkin'—cut it clean!  
Been a sot sence Jones's barn  
Wuz a woodshed—couldn't 'arn  
Half his salt an' starved his wife  
All her hopeless married life.  
Heered las' night, he got th' grit  
Someway in his soul t' quit!

Sounds onreal, but 'taint no lie —  
I jist seen th' hearse go by!

I jist heered that Liddy Wall  
Quit her scoldin', good an' all!

## THE REFORMED

Heered her husband's restin' well  
Fust time in a right smart spell!  
Liddy allus used t' say  
She'd quit scoldin' him some day,  
But she never quite could git  
Made up in her mind t' quit!

Sounds onreal, but 'taint no lie —  
I jist seen th' hearse go by!

I jist heered that Abner Sykes  
Found a place he rilly likes.  
Abner moved about until  
Nothin' seemed to fill th' bill!  
Everywheres he went to yet  
Wuz too dry or else too wet,  
Too much drought or too much dew,  
But his movin' days is through!

Sounds onreal, but 'taint no lie —  
I jist seen th' hearse go by!

## FAMILY RESEMBLANCES

“**H**E sort o’ favors the Sykeses,”  
Says Ma, lookin’ closely at me,  
An’ she looks up at Pa as if layin’ th’ law  
An’ a-waitin’ fer him to agree.  
(The Sykeses, you know, was Ma’s people.)  
“Jes’ see that small mouth an’ small chin!  
I don’t want to brag but he’s jes’ his Aunt Mag,  
I tell ye, right over ag’in.”

“Walks jes’ like his Uncle Cornelius!”  
(“He couldn’t walk straight if he tried,  
An’ I had him to bail ’leven times out o’ jail,”  
Says Pa, in a sorter aside.)  
“Swings along jes’ like him,” Ma says, smilin’.  
(“He orter have swung!” Pa mos’ chokes,  
Fer it always makes him jes’ a-bilin’  
When Ma claims I favor her folks.)

“Got the reg’lar Sykes disposition.”  
(“An’ a devil’s own temper it is,”  
Says Pa down beneath his breath, grittin’ his teeth,  
And his dander beginnin’ to sizz.)  
“An’ his hair, well, it’s jes’ like Aunt Sary’s,  
Thet married Lige Jenks from the Mills,  
An’ his nose is the picter o’ Mary’s,  
An’ his brow is th’ image o’ Will’s.”

“ An’ his voice, he gits that from th’ Joneses,  
They’re cousins, you know, down in Kent;  
An’ I guess it mus’ be from his Aunt Cicely  
That he’s gittin’ his musical bent! ”  
An’ Pa, well, he gits mad as thunder  
An’ swears like a pirate at sea,  
An’ says: “ Thank the Lord that he’s gittin’ his  
board  
And his clothes and his lodgin’ from me! ”

A REMINISCENCE OF THE LONE  
PINE TRAIL

**D**EAD o' th' night an' th' moon rose pale  
As th' face o' th' man we led along.  
Over the hills th' long-drawn wail  
Of a coyote-cry, like a funeral song.

Never a man of us spoke a word  
As we tramped th' trail t' th' Lone Pine tree,  
But a wind rose out o' th' dark an' stirred  
Th' grass o' th' prairies mournfully.

Mile an' a half fr'm th' ol' log jail  
T' th' Lone Pine tree at th' Devil's Bend,  
But a man don't speed on his final trail,  
With a tree an' a rope at th' other end.

Two in front as we lef' th' jail,  
Two behind an' two at th' side;  
Then forward march f'r th' Lone Pine trail  
Th' last this side o' th' Great Divide.

He walks along an' he knows th' plan,  
An' seems resigned as a man can be;  
F'r a life's a life, an' a man's a man.  
A rope's a rope an' a tree's a tree.



Give him a plenty o' room t' walk,  
Don' hurry a man on his final track;  
Plenty o' time if he wants t' talk,—  
F'r he stays thar when th' rest come back.

Stan' back, an' give him a chance t' pray,  
He needs God's help in th' by an' by;  
F'r a man will sin an' a man mus' pay,  
But a man can't do no more'n die.

Grit yer teeth f'r th' struggle, Pard,  
We'll make it quick as it can be made.  
Down, down on th' other end thar! *Hard!*  
A man has sinned an' a man has paid!

Th' hills are grim an' th' mornin's gray,  
Thar's somethin' thar 'twixt th' sod an' sky.  
A man will sin an' a man mus' pay,  
But a man can't do no more'n die!

## THE VOLUNTEER

“**I**F I was back at Tinker’s Creek”— he allus  
used to say,  
An’ stretch his arms out straight an’ yawn in  
sech a lazy way;  
“ If I was back at Tinker’s Creek, I tell you what  
I’d do,  
I’d get a can of worms f’r bait and I’d be callin’ you  
T’ get your lines and bobbers out, an’ we’d go down  
th’ lane  
T’ where a little footpath turns, down t’other side  
th’ grain,  
An’ winds a half-mile through th’ woods, until a  
feller gets  
His nose jist full of blossom smells, an’ mint an’  
violets! ”

“ If I was back at Tinker’s Creek ”— a dozen times  
a day  
He’d look out sorter yearnin’ like, in sech a dreamy  
way,  
As though he had ’em in his eyes, th’ blossoms an’  
th’ rain  
That used t’ make th’ flowers fresh an’ drip all down  
th’ lane.

“ If I was back at Tinker’s Creek I tell you what  
I’d do,  
I’d sharpen up that scythe o’ mine an’ go a-slashin’  
through  
That clover jist beyond th’ hedge, an’ I’d jist sorter  
give  
A great big sigh o’ thankfulness f’r bein’ let to live.”

“ If I was back at Tinker’s Creek ”— sometimes  
he’d stop at mess  
An’ wipe his eyes an’ sorter choke all up with lone-  
someness;  
An’ tell us where th’ pasture was an’ where th’ old  
folks’ house  
Stood on a knoll, an’ maybe he’d be drivin’ up th’  
cows  
If he was there at milkin’ time, an’ then he’d sigh  
an’ say:  
“ If I was back to Tinker’s Creek, I’d take you right  
to-day  
Out where them cider apples grow, an’ shake th’  
biggest tree  
An’ stand right there an’ let ’em come a-droppin’  
over me.”

“ If I was back at Tinker’s Creek,” he says to me  
one day  
When we were on th’ firin’ line, an’ smiled that  
funny way;

"If I was back at Tinker's Creek," an' then he  
turned half 'round

An' staggered some an' dropped his gun and sat  
down on th' ground.

"I guess they've hit me pretty bad!" he whispered;  
an' he said:

"If I was back at Tinker's Creek, th' hedge would  
all be red

Jist like it is this time o' year, an' I'd be callin'  
you ——"

An' then he closed his eyes — I guess that Tinker's  
Creek come true!

## PARTING WORDS

**A**BNER WILCOX brung some eggs  
In t' sell; an' Ezry Beggs  
Counts 'em out, an' Abner waits  
Fer his money, 'cuz he hates  
T' give credit; an' he says:  
" Good Lord keep ye, Brother Ez!  
It's a wicked world an' we  
Ain't jist what we orto be! "

An' nex' day, why, Ezry Beggs  
Says thet half of Abner's eggs  
Proves them partin' words of his  
Jist ez true ez Scripture is!

Abner Wilcox allus brung  
Some good sayin' on his tongue  
'Bout th' wickedness of sin  
When he brung his butter in.  
Set his crock right down an' say:  
" Good Lord guard ye on yer way,  
Brother Ez — life's jist a span,  
Let's be decent ez we can! "

Ezry says it wuz a sin  
(When he put his tryer in)

## PARTING WORDS

93

Abner's butter hadn't heard  
Brother Abner's partin' word!

Abner brung some broilers, all  
Dressed along in early fall,  
An' got top-notch price becuz  
Of how scurce young chickens wuz.  
"Years is passin', Ez," says he,  
"Gittin' older, you an' me,  
But we ain't real old ez long,  
Ez th' heart is full of song!"

An' nex' day, why, Ezry, he  
Told it t' Hod Griggs an' me:  
"Too bad," Ezry says, "by jing,  
Abner's broilers couldn't sing!"

## CROSSING THE DIVIDE

**P**ARSON, I'm a maverick, just runnin' loose  
an' grazin',  
Eatin' where's th' greenest grass an'  
drinkin' where I choose,

Had to rustle in my youth an' never had no raisin',  
Wasn't never halter broke, an' I ain't much to  
lose.

Used to sleepin' in a bag an' lyin' in a slicker.  
Church folks never branded me — I don't know  
as they tried;

Wish you'd say a prayer for me an' try to make a  
dicker,  
For the best they'll give me when I cross the Big  
Divide.

Tell 'em I ain't been corralled a night in more 'n  
twenty,  
Tell 'em I'm rawboned an' rough an' I ain't much  
for looks;

Tell 'em I don't need much grief because I've had a  
plenty.  
I don't know how bad I am 'cause I ain't kept no  
books.

Tell 'em I'm a maverick a-runnin' loose unbranded,  
Tell 'em I shoot straight an' quick an' ain't got  
much to hide;

Have 'em come an' size me up as soon as I get  
landed,  
I just want my needin's when I cross th' Big Di-  
vide.

Tell 'em I rode straight an' square an' never grabbed  
for leather,  
Never roped a crippled steer or rode a sore-  
backed horse,  
Tell 'em I've bucked wind an' rain an' every sort of  
weather,  
Had my tilts with Al. K. Hall an' Captain R. E.  
Morse.  
Don't hide nothin' from 'em whether it be sweet or  
bitter,  
Tell 'em I'll stay on th' range, but if I'm shut out-  
side  
I'll abide it like a man, because I ain't no quitter,  
I ain't going to change just when I cross the Big  
Divide.

Tell 'em when th' Roundup comes for all us human  
critters  
Just corral me with my kind an' run a brand on  
me;  
I don't want to be corralled with hypocrites an'  
quitters,  
Brand me just for what I am — an' I'm just what  
you see.



I don't want no steam-het stall, or bran-mash for my  
ration,

I just want to meet th' Boss an' face him honest-  
eyed,

Show him just what chips I got an' shove 'em in for  
cashin',

That's what you can tell 'em when I cross the  
Big Divide.

## SENTENCED

“**W**HAT ye up fer?” Squire, says he.  
“ Matrimony,” says Hank Lee,  
Blushin’ red ez he c’d be.

“ Stand up closter! ” Squire, says he.  
“ Jine hands tight, an’ look at me!  
Sary Wilkins, what’s yer plea? ”

“ Speak up louder! ” Squire, says he.  
“ Life imprisonment ’ll be  
Sentence passed on both o’ ye.”

“ At hard labor! ” Squire, says he.  
“ Bailiff, let th’ prisoners be  
Held, awaitin’ shivvaree! ”

“ An’ ten dollars,” Squire, says he,  
“ Fer th’ court that sentenced ye.  
Next offender! Who’ll it be? ”

## UNTRIED

**E**LMER HODGES 'lowed that he's  
Tried a thousand remedies  
For his indigestion; said  
He 'ud 'bout ez leave be dead  
Ez t' be a wreck an' be  
Allus crippled up like he  
Is becuz his stummick jest  
Acts th' very orn'riest.

Elmer said he's set around  
Twenty years an' he ain't found  
Any blessed comfort yet  
Any way he tries t' set.  
An' th' medicines he's took  
Outen Hod Brigg's doctor book  
Cost him nigh enough an' more  
T' buy Ezry Pembroke's store.

An' then Ezry told him, dry,  
'Bout one thing he'd orto try  
Which cured more complaints, he guessed,  
In its time than all th' rest.  
"What's that, Ezry?" Elmer says.  
"Jest a little work," says Ez,  
Winkin' at us, dry an' odd,  
An' Jess Blair, he jest haw-hawed!

## UNREST

**T**H' feller thet lives in th' country  
Gits dreamin' an' hears  
Th' city's glad music come swellin'  
So sweet to his ears  
Th' woods ain't th' same an' th' blossoms  
Thet he loved so long,  
As if some worm-canker was eatin'  
Th' heart of th' song.

Th' feller thet lives in th' country  
Gits dreamin' an' sees  
Th' city's glad columns go marchin'  
As gay as y' please;  
Till furrers is long-turned an' lonesome  
When twilight gits gray,  
An' somethin' like canker is blightin'  
Th' heart of th' day.

Th' feller thet lives in th' city  
Gits dreamin' an' hears  
Th' country's soft choruses murmur  
So sweet in his ears  
Th' streets ain't th' same an' th' towers  
Thet he knew so long,  
An' somethin' like sorrow is eatin'  
Th' heart of th' song.

Th' feller that lives in th' city  
Gits dreamin' an' sees  
Green hills where th' cattle are browsin'  
An' all through th' trees  
Deep shadders so cool an' refreshin'  
With squirrels at play,  
An' somethin' like longin' is blightin'  
Th' heart of his day.

## HEREDITARY

**F**ELLER makes his money an' he works his  
way through school,  
Chooses his perfession or his business, as a  
rule,  
Picks out his own sweetheart, as he gits along in  
life,  
Follows his own notions when he marries him a wife.  
Chooses his abidin' place, whatever state he please,  
Uses his own judgment in all matters such as these,  
But I've allus noticed in my travelin's aroun',  
Feller gits religion an' his party handed down!

Don' know why it should be, but it's nearly allus so,  
Methodists from Methodists 'most everywhere you  
go;  
Baptists keep on Baptists, as their ancestors before,  
People seekin' Heaven in th' faith their parents  
bore.  
Doctors come from farmers — ain't no rule to gov-  
ern that,  
(Never git Republican from some old Democrat!)  
Democrats from Democrats, 'most all th' way  
aroun',  
We all git religion an' our party handed down!

## HEREDITARY

Still, I ain't a-kickin'— I'm Republican am I,  
Church-ways I'm Episcopal! — don't know exactly  
why;

Got it from my parents who inherited of it,  
An' I haven't ever worried much about th' fit.  
Got so much to think about of things I really need,  
Saved a lot of trouble when they picked me out a  
creed.

Might been Prohibitionist, if lef' t' choose aroun',  
Glad I had religion an' my party handed down!

## DAYS OF CHEER

“**F**EELIN’ fine,” he used t’ say,  
Come a clear or cloudy day,  
Wave his hand, an’ shed a smile,  
Keepin’ sunny all th’ while.  
Never let no bug-bears grim  
Git a wrastle-holt o’ him,  
Kep’ a-smilin’ rain or shine,  
Tell you he was “feelin’ fine!”

“Feelin’ fine,” he used t’ say,  
Wave his hand an’ go his way.  
Never had no time t’ lose  
So he said, in fighting blues.  
Had a twinkle in his eye  
Always when a-goin’ by,  
Sort o’ smile up into mine,  
Tell me he was “feelin’ fine!”

“Feelin’ fine,” he’d allus say,  
An’ th’ sunshine seemed t’ stay  
Close by him, or else he shone  
With some sunshine of his own.  
Didn’t seem no clouds could dim  
Any happiness for him,  
Allus seemed to have a line  
Out f’r gladness — “feelin’ fine!”



## DAYS OF CHEER

“ Feelin’ fine,” I’ve heered him say  
Half a dozen times a day,  
An’ as many times I knowed  
He was bearin’ up a load.  
But he never let no grim  
Troubles git much holt on him,  
Kep’ his spirits jest like wine,  
Bubblin’ up an’ “ feelin’ fine! ”

“ Feelin’ fine ” — I hope he’ll stay  
All his three score that-a-way,  
Lettin’ his demeanor be  
Sech as you could have or me  
Ef we tried, an’ went along  
Spillin’ little drops o’ song,  
Lettin’ rosebuds sort o’ twine  
O’er th’ thorns an’ “ feelin’ fine.”

## ACHIEVEMENT

**I** DUNNO — I may be foolish, but it allus  
seems to me  
Thet our dreams is jest like childurn, sech as  
you might have er me;  
We kin look back there an' see 'em ez they used  
t' be in youth,  
When we thought life was all pleasure an' the  
speech o' men all truth.  
We kin look back an' remember how they made  
us glad all day,  
When they jest walked hand in hand with us, afore  
they went away,  
They was allus bright ez sunshine an' ez light an'  
fine ez foam,  
An' then they growed up an' left us — jest like  
childurn leavin' home.

Once th' house was peopled with 'em, an' they  
played like childurn play,  
Inter every nook an' cranny, never restin' all th' day.  
Once we heered 'em allus laughin' jest like childurn  
laugh fer you,  
An' a-talkin' of tomorrer, jest th' same as childurn  
do.

Once no day was bright without 'em, an' they  
gathered in th' light  
Of th' grate an' smiled about us jest like childurn  
do at night,  
An' then they went back to Dreamland, an' they left  
us in th' gloam  
Of our life alone and lonesome — jest like childurn  
leavin' home.

Why, it ain't so long, I reckon, leastwise that's th'  
way it seems,  
Sence I was th' happy daddy of a family o' dreams.  
When they clustered all about me an' they climbed  
up in my chair,  
An' they smiled at me an' greeted me from almost  
everywhere.  
Every night I heered 'em singin'— I could hear 'em  
jest ez plain!  
An' they used t' dance before me all th' way along  
th' lane;  
How they kept me sweet an' hopeful on what rough  
road I might roam,  
But they've all growed up an' left me, jest like chil-  
durn leavin' home.

An' sometimes I set at evenin' where I used t' see  
'em play,  
Sort o' solemn like an' lonesome, sence they're  
growed an' gone away;

Sort o' glad I used t' have 'em, when I git t' dreamin'  
on,

'Bout ez glad I used t' have 'em ez I'm sorry that  
they're gone.

How I used t' set a-dreamin' in this big old-  
fashioned chair,

With th' dreams like childurn playin' in my castles  
in th' air.

They was colored jest like rainbows an' ez light an'  
fine ez foam,

But they've all growed up an' left me — jest like  
childurn leavin' home.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE JOKER

**S**ANDY had no tinge of ochre, and he played his hand at poker well supported by the joker in the belt about his waist;

Not his custom 'twas to bicker unless oversteeped in liquor, but no man was ever quicker on the trigger, and his haste

It was written plainly, very, in the frontier cemetery, where the custom 'twas to bury those who dallied with the wine,

Subsequently to be ruing when some argument was brewing, and thereafter something doing in the undertaking line.

Now, upon the day I'm naming, Sandy sat there fiercely gaming, and quite frequently inflaming his mentality with stuff

Drawn from out a sombre bottle by a gentleman named Wattel, who presided at the throttle of the bar at Devil's Bluff.

And while Wattel was infusing drink, poor Sandy's cash kept oozing from the hoard that he was losing to a kindred spirit, known

Far and wide as Bill-the-Soaker (title given by some joker), who was very fond of poker and was always dry as bone.

THE ORIGIN OF THE JOKER 109

Be it evermore a warning to the graceless soul's  
adorning that the resurrection morning draw-  
eth near for him, who, bold,

Seeks by sinful ways and handy in a poker game to  
bandy with a wicked man like Sandy when the  
deck is passing cold.

For, when Sandy having aces full on jacks, laid down  
ten cases there was wonder on the faces of the  
watchers, who looked grim

When the thoughtless William, staying, laid down  
aces four, and saying: "You can't beat it,"  
went to weighing what the pot would profit  
him.

Now, no deck upon earth's face is graced with quite  
so many aces since there are no fitting places  
for the number, and the brand

Of unfairness in his poker being placed on Bill-the-  
Soaker, Sandy drew — and drew his "joker,"  
seeking thus to fill his hand;

Drew and held it, muzzle aiming straight at  
William, and, proclaiming what he held, de-  
clared the gaming at an end, and, raking in,

Said three aces and a joker were a winning hand at  
poker, whereat William (called the Soaker)  
acquiesced the hand would win.

It was in the rough and gory days that saw the  
Frontier's glory, and 'twas thus, so runs the  
story, that the joker came to be

## 110 THE ORIGIN OF THE JOKER

Introduced to Hoyle's attention by a plainsman's shrewd invention of a means to beat four aces when himself he held up three.

And the well-known master crafter said in every pack thereafter must be one card, named for Laughter, and be kept there evermore,

Kept there in commemoration of shrewd Sandy's declaration, that a quick draw and three aces made a better hand than four.

## AN ELEGY IN A COUNTRY PRINTSHOP

**H**E'S taken "thirty" off the hook. It's quitting time for Slim.

We've closed the shop this afternoon to read the proof on him  
And find it pretty middling clean — a pi line here and there,

But only such a one as apt to slip in anywhere.  
His ticket's on the Foreman's desk, all figured up,  
I s'pose.

He had some fat takes and some lean, but that's the way it goes.

I don't know what's his overtime or what his check will be.

I guess he'll strike the average along with you and me.

He set a measure middling wide — he liked to set that way —

His work was mostly solid stuff and not much on display.

He should have lived threescore of years, a friend of yours and mine.

It's tough to think some worthless chap is quadding out his line.

He told me nigh a month ago, as cool as anything,



His dupes were cut and pasted up, a middling longish string.

He said he never skinned the shop and guessed he'd had his share

Of overtime and double price, and maybe some to spare.

He set a proof that showed up clean and did his work up right.

He never shirked by day so he could double space at night.

The make-up's dumped his matter in. His form is closed, you see.

His galley's empty on the rack; his slug is Twenty-three.

We don't know what the Cashier's desk will have to give to Slim.

We'll mark a turn rule in the proof and say a prayer for him.

For him the dawn is in the east, it's getting light up-town,

And "thirty" taken off the hook; the last form's going down!

## THE PERFECT STAGE-ROBBER

**T**H' most perlitest robber, Pard, that ever  
flashed a gun  
On th' frontier trail to Deadwood, whar  
th' stages used to run.  
I was dozin' off an' dreamin' when th' driver hol-  
lered "Whoa!"  
An' I heered a clickin' trigger whar th' sagebrush  
used t' grow  
Higher'n Six-Foot Spencer's middle; in a most per-  
suadin' way  
He invited us t' linger while he passed th' time of  
day;  
He had one of Colt's persuaders, which jest mesmer-  
izes you  
When you look into it stiddy fer a minute's time er  
two!

Th' most perlitest robber, Pard, that ever robbed a  
stage  
On th' road, as I remember now, in this er any age;  
He was coverin' th' driver an' th' men of us, an' that  
Was th' reason, so he told us, that he didn't tip his  
hat  
To th' ladies of th' party, which th' same he couldn't  
chance,

114 THE PERFECT STAGE-ROBBER

But his breedin' was remarkable — I seen that at  
a glance.

Th' most perlitest robber, Pard, I ever, ever met.  
He was jest a perfect master of th' laws of etiquette!

He smiled behind his weapen — good a smile as you  
could ask,

An' it run up on his face an' then was lost behind  
his mask.

Th' driver acted offish, so he shot him through th'  
arm,

But apologized profoundly fer this necessary harm.  
An' he said, " Now, all in favor of preservin' life's  
few sands

Indicate th' inclination, please, by holdin' up your  
hands! "

Th' vote was all affirmative, as fur as I could see,  
An' he said, " I thank you, brethren, fer this una-  
nimity! "

I remember when I offered him my ticker he said,  
" I'm

A very, very busy man, but glad to take th' time! "  
We had a school ma'am with us an' a little, shy,  
trained nurse,

An' he said, " You're wearied, ladies — won't you  
let me take your purse? "

He looked so pained an' troubled when one feller  
stood, unpursed,

THE PERFECT STAGE-ROBBER 115

An' offered him his money, an' he murmured,  
"Ladies first!"

A rebuke quite unexpected, but it proves, where'er  
you go,  
That natural perlitiness and gentility will show!

Th' most perlitest robber, Pard, I ever, ever met,  
A perfect an' past master of th' laws of etiquette!  
He took up his collection, an' he cut th' tugs an'  
spoke,

"You see, I leave no traces!"—which was some-  
thin' of a joke.

He bowed to both th' ladies an' perlitely backed  
away,

"So fortunate a meeting! Such a profitable day!"  
He cried to us at partin'—"Be a pleasant journey  
thine!

I'm very glad I met you, an' th' pleasure is all  
mine!"

## THE MISTAKEN CUE

**S**CRIMP SHORT, th' banker, tells some stale  
ol' joke,  
An' Abner Watkins laughs nigh fit t' choke,  
An' Peleg Hawkins lets out a wild screech  
An' slaps his knees an' says: "Ain't that a  
peach!"

Hod Griggs, th' grocer, hollers like his crow  
Is all choked up, an' Pike Botts says: "Haw, haw!  
Th' best I've heered in many a day, by jing!"  
An' holds his sides an' snorts like everything.

Kin almost tell from hearin' of 'em snort  
Which one has got th' biggest note with Short!

Scrimp Short says sich-an'-sich is so-an'-so,  
An' Abner Watkins drinks it in as though  
It's gospel from St. Luke; an' Peleg says:  
"There's common sense to that, Hod Griggs, I  
guess!"

An' Hod Griggs says: "I allus told you, Hawk,  
Scrimp Short could go t' Congress in a walk!"  
An' Pike Botts sets up in his cheer, an' he  
Jist looks at Scrimp, an' looks admirin'ly.

Kin almost tell from hearin' of 'em speak  
Which ones can't pay their interest next week!

An' one time when Scrimp Short was layin' law  
Down hard, Pike Botts come in an' says: "Haw,  
haw!"

An' busted out a-laughin' cuz he thort  
Scrimp's tellin' of a joke an' that he ort  
T' come in on the haw-haw good an' strong,  
But he seen in a minute he was wrong,  
Cuz Short was talkin' fie-nance, great an' small,  
An' never had a joke in mind at all!

An' when Scrimp went I heered Ab Watkins snort:  
"By gosh, Botts, you hev' queered yerself with  
Short!"

## THE ORIGINAL OLD-TIMER

**H**E can remember when Frisco  
Was jist th' bare side of a bluff,  
An' one feller's dyin' in Utah  
Made more 'n twice widders enough.  
He druv' a pack mule in th' Rockies  
Afore they was hardly half growed,  
An' Denver — why he knowed when Denver  
Was jist a wide place in th' road!

He knowed th' town of Chicago  
When it was jist mist by th' Lake.  
He druv' mules all over Milwaukee  
A-lookin' fer crawfish t' bake.  
Knowed Pittsburg afore it was smoky,  
An' walked out o' town in two blocks,  
An' Cleveland, th' fust time he saw it,  
Was jist some hard coal on th' docks!

An' Omaha, fust time he saw it,  
Was jist a pack mule an' a post  
T' hitch to; an' Salt Lake was only  
A sign-board t' p'int t' th' Coast.  
“Passed Injun sign airly this mornin'”  
Was Deadwood wrote down in his log,  
Th' fust time he passed, an' Seattle  
Was jist a rain-drop in a fog!

He owned a half section of medder  
Th' corner of State an' Monroe,  
An' traded it off fer a mule team —  
Th' country was settlin' up so  
It jist made him nervous t' see it;  
He often shot black bear fer meat,  
An' plowed up what's Main Street, Milwaukee,  
T' raise some potatoes to eat!

He used t' cut slough grass fer fodder  
In what's now th' heart of St. Paul.  
Alongside of him Davy Crockett  
Was jist a newcomer — that's all.  
Y' see, as th' towns kep' improvin'  
Th' frontier life there lost its zest,  
An' he jist kep' movin' an' movin',  
An' simply growed up with th' West!



## A PROVIDENTIAL DISCOVERY.

**W**HEN the Circle's fair was ended we had  
forty dollars net,  
An' the members of the Circle had been  
duly called an' met  
To agree on how to spend it for the glory of the  
cause,  
An' agreeable to custom an' the Circle's rules an'  
laws.

Sister Sarah Newton Tarbox thought it orto go to  
pay  
On the minister's back salary, an' Sarah had her say  
Until Sister Marthy Colby p'inted out it wouldn't  
do  
Under subdivision sixty-six of chapter twenty-two.

Sister Sarah, squelched, set silent, an' she wouldn't  
say a word,  
Save thet now an' then, sarcastic, to the Circle she  
referred  
To the heathen, fat an' lazy, in a far-off furrin'  
clime,  
An' the preacher outen flour more'n half the mortal  
time.

A PROVIDENTIAL DISCOVERY 121

Sister Prudence Wilson Connors humbly ventured  
to suggest  
Thet the minister was needin' of a Sunday coat an'  
vest,  
An' we argyed on it, prayerful, till the whole plan  
was knocked out  
By a leetle p'int of order raised by Sister Susan  
Stout.

Sister Prudence set there thoughtful through the  
follerin' debate,  
With her Christian sperrit ruffled, an' allowed she  
orto state  
For the clearin' of her conscience, thet she would n't  
once demur  
If we threw it in the river, it was all the same to  
her.

Sister Amy Ellen Droppers thought the money  
sh'u'd be lent  
To some needy soul an' honest at a moderate per  
cent.,  
But the by-laws of the Circle, so said Sister Sophy  
Squeer,  
On the plan of lendin' money wa'n't exactly plain  
an' clear.

Sister Amy Ellen hinted she had nothin' more t' say  
On the plan thet she suggested ef the law stood in  
the way,

122 A PROVIDENTIAL DISCOVERY

But she said it was a pity the committee on expense  
Had n't framed the Circle's by-laws in accord with  
common sense.

Sister Evalina Spriggins said she thought it plain to  
see  
What a Furrin' Mission Circle's bounden duty orto  
be,  
An' she couldn't see how preachers of the Sperrit  
was to roam  
With the Furrin' Mission Circles spendin' money  
here at home.

At which Sister Phoebe Lucy Brown arose, an', sum-  
mat het,  
Said she guessed she knew her duty, an' she didn't  
choose to set  
An' hear a sister hintin' in a most onchristian way  
Thet the Furrin Mission Circle was a-goin' *fur*  
astray!

An' then Sister Spriggins told her thet she had n't  
meant no slur  
On the Furrin Mission Circle an', leastwise of all,  
at her,  
Said she knew thet Sister Phoebe knew her business,  
it was true,  
An' she 'd heerd she knew most everybody else's  
business, too.

A PROVIDENTIAL DISCOVERY 123

Then good Sister Patience Hitchcock said the Circle  
better burn

Every cent of it than quarrel, an' she motioned to  
adjourn

At which Sister Ellen Jackson riz up slowly on her  
feet

An' declared there was an error in the Circle's bal-  
ance-sheet.

'Stid o' havin' forty dollars over all the fair's ex-  
pense

She had found we had a deficit of sixty-seven cents,  
She had got her figgers crosswise when she added  
up her sheets

An' had put expended items in the column o' re-  
ceipts!

So with harmony prevailin', Sister Spriggins led in  
prayer,

An' Sister Phoebe Lucy Brown observed to Sister  
Blair

Thet we 're all poor, mortal creeters, who don't  
seem to understand

How the good Lord holds us, helpless, in the holler  
of his hand!

## GROWN UP?

**I** BEEN lookin' f'r some children  
Thet I used t' know;  
Used t' see 'em in th' papers  
Twenty year ago;  
Thought I used t' hear 'em playin'  
Right around my door;  
Have y' seen 'em — Riley's children?  
Don't they play no more?

Say, but them was really children;  
An' I used to read  
About Annie — Orfant Annie —  
An' I often seed  
One of 'em, I thought, a-singin'  
Right around my door;  
But I haven't seen 'em lately —  
Don't they sing no more?

W'y, I've set an' read about 'em  
An' it almos' seemed  
They was yourn or mine, a-mebbe,  
But I mus' 'a' dreamed.  
An' I thought I see one standin'  
With her dress all tore,  
An' her golden hair all tangled —  
Don't they play no more?



THE  
PUBLIC  
OFFICE  
AT  
THE  
CITY

W'y o' course — I wasn't thinkin'—  
They're all growed up now.  
It was years ago I knowed 'em,  
But it seems, somehow,  
Them 'ud allus be but children;  
Might a-knowed afore  
Thet them children — Riley's children —  
Won't come back no more!



## THE CONSERVATIVE

**W**ES' BURCH says everything looks  
well  
As fur as he can see;  
We've had a right smart rainy spell,  
About as orto be;  
But Wes' don't set a heap o' store  
By rain that has gone by,  
An' says if it don't rain no more,  
She'll be almighty dry!

Wes' Burch says his potatoes look  
First rate this time o' year,  
He had some big enough t' cook,  
All smooth an' nice an' clear.  
But Wes' don't set a heap o' store  
On how they look till fall,  
An' says if they don't grow no more,  
They'll be almighty small!

Wes' Burch says fur as he can see  
Th' grain is up t' date,  
Although a sight of it'll be  
F'r harvest mighty late.  
But Wes' don't set no store on grain  
A-growin' as it ort,

An' if we shouldn't git no rain,  
She'll be almighty short.

Wes' Burch has got right smart o' shoats  
A-gittin' plump an' fat,  
But he says 'bout this time he notes  
They allus look like that.

Wes' says there's mighty few like these  
An' orto bring big pay,  
But some incurable disease  
Might kill 'em any day.

Wes' Burch says he's a hopeful man,  
An' tries t' see things bright;  
He keeps as cheerful as he can  
An' does his farmin' right.  
Wes' Burch says fur as he can see  
Th' prospects is class first,  
But he thinks it is best t' be  
Preparin' f'r th' worst!

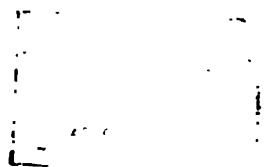
## THE PROPHET

**O**LD ELLERY GREGG, when the weather  
was fine,  
When the sunlight was bubbling and sparkling  
like wine,  
When the skies were as bright as the dreamings of  
boys  
And the day seemed to be running over with joys,  
Would squint at the sky and drink in the fresh air  
With a look of distrust and be moved to declare:  
“Ye may think it’s Spring, but th’ Winter ain’t  
quit!  
I bet ye we pay for this fine weather yit!”

Old Ellery Gregg, when the Autumn was long  
And the birds tarried late and the open brooks’ song  
In November was heard and the big yellow moon  
Made the fields near as light as the sun did at noon,  
When the earth was aflame with its yellow and red,  
Would look with distrust and a shake of his head:  
“It ain’t human natur’—this here kind of thing!  
I bet ye we ketch it nex’ Winter, by jing!”

Old Ellery Gregg, when the winds whistled keen,  
When the snow lay knee deep all the fences be-  
tween





When the boards creaked and snapped in the walk  
down the street,  
When the wires sang with frost and the limbs hung  
with sleet,  
Would tramp down the street with a challenge so  
grim  
In his eyes as though this had been ordered for him:  
“ I tol' ye, by gum, that th' Winter ain't quit;  
I tol' ye we'd pay fer that fine weather yit! ”

## A TIMOROUS TYRANT

**D**EACON SKINNER is th' boss  
Of his household, y' can bet;  
Sech a real high-strung ol' hoss,  
Can't no woman run him yet.  
Don't believe in henpecked men,  
Skeered o' how their wives'll act—  
Takes a little now an' then  
Jist as bitters—that's th' fact!

But he eats a clove, I vum,  
Jist afore he starts f'r hum!

Deacon Skinner ain't a-feared  
Of no woman y' can find.  
He's perlite, but he ain't skeered  
Of th' hull o' womankind.  
Says it only takes jist one  
Fight f'r liberty fit through  
To show wimmen y' ain't run  
By no W. C. T. U.

But he allus asts Bud Speth  
Kin he smell it on his breath!

Deacon Skinner's wife, says he,  
Wouldn't no more dare inquire

If he's had a drink, than see  
Gasoline put in th' fire.  
Deacon says th' way is to  
Have it out right on th' start;  
Be th' boss, an' you'll git through  
Life without no drift apart.

But he says to Treadwell Pew:  
"Would y' guess I had them two?"



## THE MEETING TIME

**D**OWN t' th' homestead for a day,  
When th' scythe is in th' hay,  
When the harvest moon is risin' where th'  
meadow meets th' sky.

Down t' th' homestead for a day,  
Jes' t' see her an' t' say,  
That th' time is comin' nearer for our weddin'— she  
an' I.

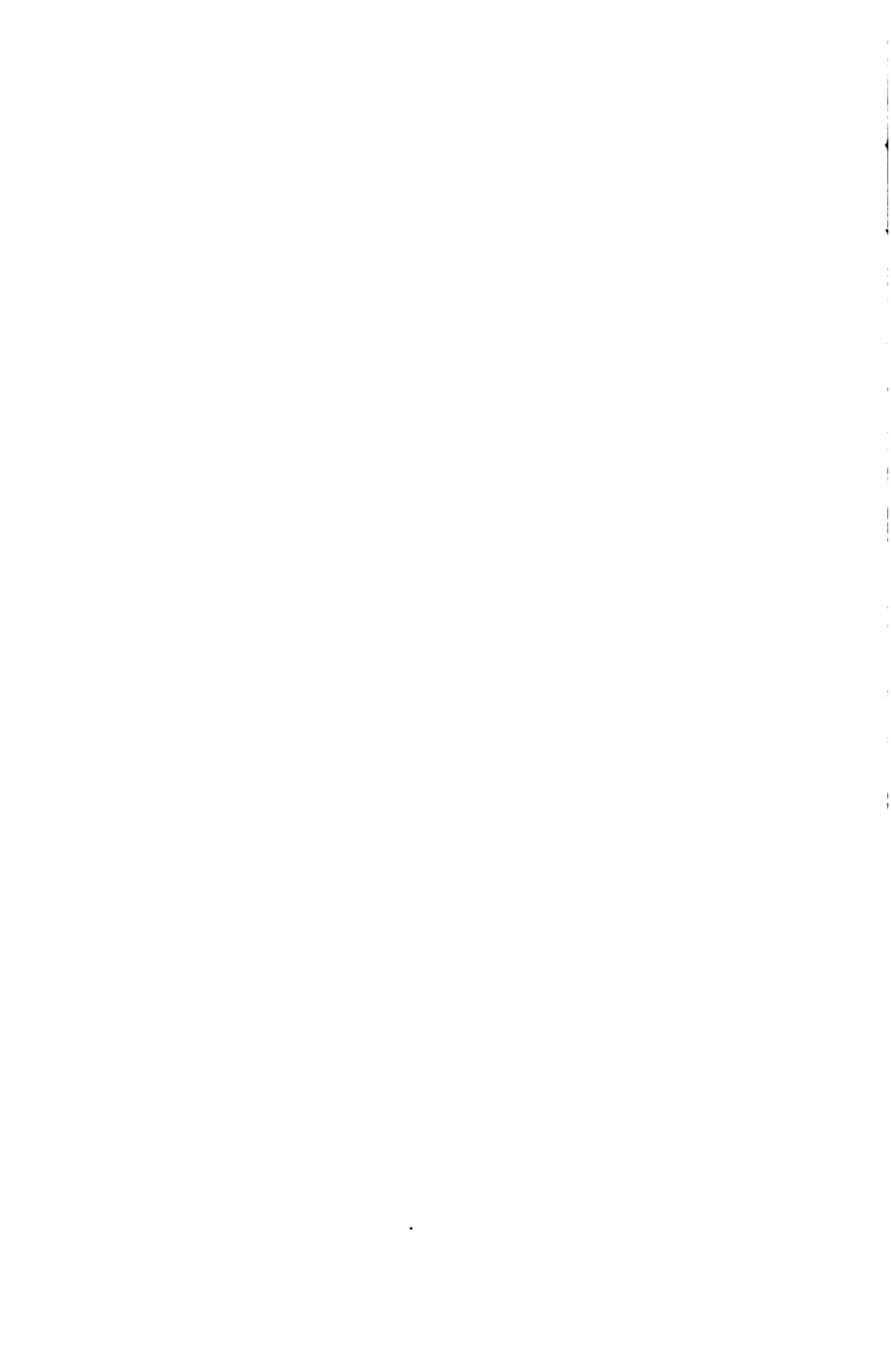
Down t' th' homestead for a day,  
An' how soon it slips away,  
While th' harvesters are hummin' an' th' sickles click  
an' sing.

Down t' th' homestead for a day,  
Jes' t' see her an' t' say  
That my heart is full of gladness an' I'm bringin'  
her th' ring.

Down t' th' homestead, cold and gray,  
Bleak th' skies an' bleak th' day,  
An' th' Autumn winds are sighin' where th' leaves  
are brown an' red.

Down t' th' homestead, cold an' gray,  
An' this was to be th' day —  
An' my tears fall like th' rain, from out th' gray  
mists overhead.





Down t' th' homestead for a day,  
How the years have slipped away,  
But my heart is always here where those sweet,  
    dead dreams buried lie.  
Heart an' head streaked thick with gray,  
But there's somethin' seems t' say  
That th' time is comin' nearer for our meetin'— she  
    an' I.

## THE SENSITIVE PLANT

**L**EM HAWKINS 'll tell you th' wheat's  
takin' root,  
An' th' weather is fair, but it don't hardly  
suit.

It's a little too warm, an' a few cloudy days  
Would help out a lot on th' crop he will raise.  
Lem Hawkins says wheat is th' ticklishes thing  
An' th' easiest hurt, an' you can't tell in spring  
Ef it's goin' t' make crop, an' about th' time when  
You think she's all safe, why, she's ruined again.

Lem Hawkins tells me if th' weather'd drop  
About thirty degrees he might git half a crop.  
His wheat promised well, but he thinks like as not  
It'll all shrivel up ef it keeps bein' hot.  
Th' spring started wet an' she got sech a stand  
An' stooled out so thick that he figgered his land  
Would perduce a big yield, but he thinks he is beat  
Becuz weather like this is jist killin' his wheat.

Lem Hawkins told me 'bout th' first of July  
Thet he might git some wheat ef it quit bein' dry.  
He thought thet his prospects was finer'n silk,  
But it come dry an' hot with his wheat in th' milk.  
Lem says ef it rains an' keeps cool he may grow

A crop, but his wheat's comin' into th' dough  
An' th' weather is pleasant — hard weather t'  
beat —

But it ain't jist th' weather that's best fer th' wheat.

Lem Hawkins he says ef th' balance o' June  
Ain't too cool er too hot, ef it don't rain too soon  
Er hold off too long, ef th' month of July  
Ain't too hot er too cold er too wet er too dry,  
Ef th' ain't any rust, ef th' straw ain't too short,  
Ef th' kernels don't blight an' git filled as they ort,  
Ef th' ain't airly frost, er too blisterin' heat,  
Wal, mebbe, perhaps — wal, he might thresh some  
wheat!

## THE THREE SHELLS

I 'LL bet I kin tell it,  
I know jes' as well it  
Is right under that one,  
I'll bet my old hat on  
It. Can't be mistaken,  
Th' can't be no fakin',  
He lifted that nutshell  
High enough so I c'd tell  
That that pea was layin'  
There! Easy as playin',  
He thought I wa'n't lookin',  
Th' ain't any crook in  
The kentry can trick me  
By jiminey crickey!  
I'll jes' fix him plenty:  
Hey, there! Bet ye twenty  
It's right under that one,  
That long, sort o' flat one!  
Put up. That's th' ticket!  
Now let's see ye pick it  
Up!

Gosh, it ain't under,  
I'm busted, by thunder!





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## DOWN AND OUT

**U**SED to brag when work was slack,  
    Nothin' else to do,  
    Couldn't put him on his back,  
    No use tryin' to.  
Said he'd been in many a bout,  
    Wrastlin' every day,  
Nobody could put him out,  
    Wasn't built that way.

Little feller name o' Hall,  
    Well known here in town,  
Wasn't neither short nor tall,  
    Tried to put him down.  
Used to wrestle every day,  
    Wrestled quite a bit,  
Hall 'u'd lose, but always say:  
    " Bet I throw him yit! "

Wal — they wrestled on for years,  
    Finally, one day,  
After all his jokes an' jeers,  
    Hall put him away.  
Put him out for good and all;  
    " Don't know Hall? " How so?  
First name's Al an' last name's Hall,  
    Middle name was Coe.

## DOCTHER DOOLEY — LL. D.

I'VE bin wa-aitin' f'r some college,  
Blessed wid dignity an' knowledge,  
Av which wit is first vice president and  
humor is thrustee,  
To sind all th' world a greetin'  
Av a quite informal meetin'  
To confer on Ma-artin Dooley th' degree of  
LL. D.

Shure, they do it th' world over;  
" Docther " Cha-ancy — " Docther " Grover —  
" Docther " — half a thousand others I could  
mintion if I choose;  
An' in all th' world av wit or  
Humor, tell me who is fitter  
Than is Mister Ma-artin Dooley f'r t' fill a doc-  
ther's shoes?

Jist imagine it: " Yours thruly,  
' Docther' — ' Docther ' Ma-artin Dooley. "  
Th' divil fly away wid ye, an' don't ye understand  
That av all th' famous min I see  
Jist Dooley's lift an' Hinnessy,  
Who haven't yet bin docthered as their services  
dema-and.

Shure, I'm timplted t' be startin'  
 Jist a little wan f'r Ma-artin,  
 Av which ivery last good fellow in th' land shall  
 be thrustee,  
 Widout faculty — no chaffin'—  
 Save th' faculty f'r laughin',  
 An' confer on Ma-artin Dooley th' degree av  
 LL. D.

Thin, be hivins, sir, whiniver  
 Ye had blues or torpid liver  
 An' were needin' av a tonic — an' there's minny  
 needs th' sa-ame —  
 Y'd be sindin' f'r yours thruly,  
 " Docther "—" Docther " Ma-artin Dooley  
 An' be takin' his prescription to th' glory av his  
 na-ame.

## A LITTLE BIT O' RILEY

**J**ES' a little bit o' Riley when th' twilight's  
growin' dim,  
You can open of it anywheres an' read a verse  
from him.

It rests me when I'm weary, an' it cheers me when  
I'm sad,

An' sometimes th' pathos in it, while I'm cryin',  
makes me glad.

For I like it 'cause it's human, an' my heart jes'  
seems t' say

That if it could speak, like Riley's, it would talk jes'  
thataway!

Jes' a little bit o' Riley when th' summer is in bloom,  
'Cause it sort o' adds a measure to th' fragrance an'  
perfume.

It seems to lend new meanin' to th' chatter an' th'  
song

Of th' birds that cry up yonder an' th' brooks that  
dance along.

An' I like it 'cause it's honest an' my heart jes' seems  
t' say

That if it could speak, like Riley's, it would talk jes'  
thataway!

Jes' a little bit o' Riley when the shadders fall on  
me —

(An' I know I'll meet my Pilot where th' stream be-  
comes th' sea!)

An' I want to meet him honest, as a man should  
meet a man,

An' I want to be clean-hearted an' as decent as I can.  
So I want a verse o' Riley an' I want to smile an'  
say:

“ If my heart could plead for pardon it would talk  
jes' thataway! ”

## THE WRECK OF THE WOMAN'S CIRCLE

**S**UE ALLEN! Laws o' mercy! We ain't  
never had no peace  
Since th' day she j'ined th' Circle with her  
sister an' her niece  
An' began a-pickin' flaws an' findin' fault with every-  
thing  
Fr'm th' organ in th' choir loft to th' pastor's study-  
wing.

Said th' church was small an' stuffy an' we orto build  
a new,  
An' she fumed an' fussed an' fretted till she had us  
all a-stew,  
An' she argyed an' she argyed till she got us to  
agree  
That we'd raise a thousand dollars if th' Mission  
made it three.

It was social, social, social, with each heavin' mortal  
breath,  
We must raise a thousand dollars, so we socialed 'em  
to death,  
It was cream an' cake an' chicken till Melinda Wil-  
kins said  
She would give us *all* her earnin's if we'd see that  
*she* was fed.

An' we never had a meetin' but it turned on ways  
an' means,  
On th' cost o' lath an' plaster an' th' size o' window  
screens,  
An' she had us money-grubbin' like a lot o' Mam-  
mon's slaves  
When we'd orto been a-thinkin' of our sinful souls  
an' graves.

When Sapphira Snodgrass left us it made somethin'  
of a stir,  
For she said th' pace we'd taken was a trifle fast for  
her;  
So she sent her resignation an' she told us plain an'  
clear  
That she wasn't goin' t' try to lay up all her treas-  
ures *here*.

Marthy Wiggins started even with Sue Allen at th'  
post  
But before we'd raised five hundred she had given  
up th' ghost,  
An' she sent word to th' Circle she had done her  
level best  
But she'd wrecked her nervous system an' she'd  
have to take a rest.

But Sue Allen never faltered; with a firm, forbiddin'  
eye



She declared we'd keep our pledges an' she knitted  
" Do or Die "  
In a fancy lettered motto which induced Matilda  
Skidd  
To observe it didn't matter if we Died or if we Did.

Blossom Craven she staid loyal to th' project, floor  
to dome,  
An' earned hopes of high salvation by neglectin'  
things at home  
Till her husband got to drinkin' since she left him in  
th' lurch,  
An' she felt his mortal temple more important than  
th' church.

At th' forty-second social, held on Primrose Potter's  
lawn,  
I was leanin' on an elligum, feelin' kind o' worn an'  
gone,  
When Rebekah Mullin's eldest came across th' lawn  
to tell  
How Rebekah Mullin's youngest had just fallen  
down th' well.

He was fished out, wet an' gaspin', but Rebekah  
then an' there  
Sent a word by Ellen Wilson that she guessed she'd  
done her share,  
An' hereafter she was willin' to do what was right  
an' just,

But her children needed watchin', an' she'd have to  
do that fust.

When we'd raised eight hundred dollars, leavin'  
only two to gain,  
Sarah Pembroke fell in harness fr'm th' pressure o'  
th' strain,  
An' she said it was a question between givin' up th'  
boast  
Made by Sue to raise a thousand or of givin' up th'  
ghost.

When we'd sold our whole possessions for whatever  
they would fetch  
To squeeze money out o' nothin' an' were comin'  
down th' stretch,  
Amy Ringrose, bakin' doughnuts for a Woman's  
Food Exchange  
Slipped an' scalded herself dreadful in th' hot lard  
on th' range.

So th' Circle by th' wayside faded slowly fr'm our  
view,  
An' we had to change th' rules to make a quorum  
out o' two.  
An' th' day we reached th' limit of th' task that Sue  
had set  
There was only me an' Susan when th' Woman's  
Circle met.

An' we've got th' thousand dollars that we pledged  
ourselves to get  
An' th' Mission's give th' other that it promised us;  
— an' yet  
Sue Allen, she admitted as she wept upon my neck,  
That we'd got th' Church we wanted but th' Circle  
was a wreck!

## ON THE ROAD

**H**ANDSOME pair o' Colts — eh, Stranger?  
No, there ain't a bit of danger.  
Let yer vision sort o' linger  
On that off one — minds my finger  
At th' slightest touch. Be keerful!  
'Cause I'm allus sort o' fearful  
They're so everlastin' willin'.  
Might go off an' make a killin'.

Handsome pair o' Colts, I tell ye.  
Mind yer hands! It's jes' as well ye  
Keep 'em lifted like I told ye,  
'Cause it ain't no odds how bold ye  
Be — it won't do ye no service  
If my finger sh'd get nervous,  
An' I wouldn't have 'em harm ye.  
Jes' stand still till I disarm ye.

See the muzzle o' that nigh one?  
Feller right here tried t' buy one  
Not a week ago — it's funny,  
But he shelled out all his money  
Jes' th' minute he laid eyes on  
Him. Remarkable surprisin'  
What a pair o' Colts 'll fetch ye  
'Fore the vigilantes get ye!

Come on, Stranger — better loosen!  
Tain't no use in yer refusin'

'Cause th' odds is all agin' ye,  
An' I ain't a-goin' t' chin ye  
More'n an hour or two. So hurry  
'Cause these Colts is apt t' worry,  
An' whenever they get fretful  
They jes' act up somethin' dreadful.

Thanks! That's handsome! Now jes' mind me:  
Drive along. Don't look behind ye

Er yer hour-glass's sand 'll  
Run out fast. They're hard t' handle.  
Keep straight on thar — that's a wise 'un!  
“Forty-fours”? Oh, yes. Surprisin'  
What a pair o' Colts 'll fetch ye.  
Evenin', Stranger. Glad I met ye!

## THE LOSS OF A HORSE

**G**OT a price on his head,  
An' th' ranch-boss, he said  
He'd prefer him alive, but he would take  
him dead.

Same ol' trouble, o' course,  
Drink an' Cap. R. E. Morse  
An' a dash f'r th' plains on another man's hoss.

Knowed him since he's a lad,  
Used t' bunk with his Dad,  
Ain't a natural tough, but in liquor he's bad.  
Fill hi'self to his chin,  
Soak hi'self to th' skin  
An' then sit around waitin' a chance to mix in.

Say! Th' youngster could ride  
Anything with a hide  
On its back where th' hair was a-growin' outside.  
Roll a good cigarette  
On his hoss on a bet  
When th' cayuse was buckin' an' never lost yet.

Sittin' there in th' camp,  
Sort o' worn out an' damp,  
An' his hoss ga'nt an' tired fr'm a ninety-mile tramp

Through th' snow an' th' sleet,  
An' he took liquor neat,  
F'r th' stuff seemed t' be both his drink an' his meat.

I dunno! Somethin' hot  
Passed between 'em — a shot,  
An' th' other man drawed summat slower 'n he  
ought.

Well! It wasn't much loss,  
But th' big buckskin hoss  
That he tuk when he skipped was th' pride of th'  
boss!

'Taint because that galoot  
That he killed with a beaut  
Of a shot had an idee he knew how to shoot.  
Ef he jest hadn't tuk  
That especial ol' buck-  
Skin th' boss broke hi'self 'twouldn't matter — wuss  
luck!

Got a price on his head,  
An' th' ranch-boss, he said  
He'd prefer him alive, but he would take him dead.  
'Cause a man ain't much loss,  
But it's time, says th' boss,  
That all plainsmen was learnin' a hoss is a hoss.

## THE VILLAGE COBBLER

**H**ELLO, Doc. Got th' rheumatiz.  
I dunno what on airth it is,  
But jest let th' weather change a bit  
An' I'm mighty nigh down flat with it.  
I was goin' t' mend them shoes of yourn,  
But I jest ain't quite got around to it yit!

You healthy rascal! Don't you smile,  
'Cause th' years 'll git you after while.  
Oh, I remember — yes, I do,  
When I was young an' strong, like you.  
But I been bent over this bench so long  
That I squeak and squawk like a bran-new shoe.

Mornin', Squire! Kind o' nasty day.  
Oh, yes, I keep on peggin' away.  
But it don't seem like I git much done,  
Though I'm up with th' very first peep o' sun.  
I did hope to have that job o' yourn,  
But I ain't got around yet to mend that one.

'Day, Mis' Green! Hope I see you well.  
Oh, I'm so so. Jest a little spell  
O' my old complaint — sort o' saps my grit,



But I'm able to do what work I git,  
An' I was goin' t' have that patchin' done,  
But I jest ain't quite got around to it yit!

Howdy, Ben! Got yer plantin' done?

Oh, I'm about as I allus run.

I'm sufferin' some, as I allus do,  
But I'm able t' drive a peg or two.

An' I was goin' t' have them boots all done,  
But I ain't got around yit to get 'em through.

No, I ain't much of a hand t' fret.

As long as I'm healthy enough t' set

At th' ol' work bench down here an' git

My work out prompt I ain't dead yit.

Mis' Wise? How do! Them shoes of yourn?

Well, I got one done, but th' sole don't fit!

No, I don't fret if it's shine or rain,

I peg away an' I don't complain.

My shoes are good an' I make 'em fit

As well as a mortal man can git

'Em to. Hello! There's Deacon Hayes

An' I ain't got around to his job yit!



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## FOR THE LOVE OF A HORSE

**Y**OU'VE got the drop, Sandy! There's cottonwoods handy; I ain't no spring chicken — I know what it means!

So get out your halter; you won't see me falter! I ain't no cheap tenderfoot still in his teens!

You've raced me and chased me, but you ain't disgraced me! Old Baldy went lame from a prairie dog hole —

You're crippled, old fellow, but there ain't no yellow in all of your make-up, from crupper to poll!

Don't hesitate, Sandy! I know it's onhandy to hang an old friend just for stealin' a horse;

But get your traps ready for I ain't onsteady; an' justice is justice an' must take its course!

I gave all your posse a run that was flossy, through sage brush an' cactus, up cut bank an' hill,

An' now that you've caught me an' got me, why rot me! I'm just a plain outlaw, who bows to your will.

Want Baldy? Well, hold him! An' Sandy, I sold him — I got in a jackpot an' needed the dough;

I sold him to Meehan, th' same time agreein' that he'd sell him back when I wanted it so.

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An' Meehan, th' greaser, he went back on me, Sir,  
an' wouldn't make good when I flashed him a  
roll,

An' said I had sold him for keeps an' I told him  
some things not intended to comfort his soul.

Sell Baldy? Why, Sandy, he's carried me handy a  
hundred long miles in a many day's sun,

An' come in a prancin', his head up, an' dancin', just  
like a young tenderfoot sportin' a gun.

He ain't no cheap quitter! He'll cut out a critter  
an' hold him hard fast when he's roped an'  
been thrown,

An' five years I knowed him an' five years I rode him  
an' never a leg crossed his back but my own.

I got set for roamin'—there's work in Wyomin'—  
an' when that durn greaser went back on his  
word

I went an' called Baldy an' when he was called he  
just pricked up his ears an' came out of th' herd,

An' say! When he'd whinner, as I am a sinner, I  
put both my arms 'round his neck an' I cried,

An' then I just hollered an' Baldy, he follered — an'  
you know th' rest an' th' end of th' ride!

So that's th' tale, Sandy; there's cottonwoods handy!

An' I ain't afraid of th' law of th' plains,

But you can damn me, Sir, if that thievin' greaser  
will ever get Baldy — I'll blow out his brains.



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TAMM

What's that? Nothin' doin'? No tree party  
brewin'? Well, Sandy, that's handsome!  
"Just go on my course?"

What's this that's a-fillin' my eyes? Tom McQuil-  
len a-weepin'! An' all for th' love of a horse!



## A QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

**H**ER that wuz Liddy Thomas once — married a man named Brown,  
Who run away an' left his wife; so Liddy  
came back to town

With the cunnin'est little baby, but nary a cent had  
she,

So we summoned a special meetin' o' the Aid Society.

The members wuz summat flustered; we'd all o' us  
paid our dues

Till the treasury wuz a-groanin', but never a call to  
use

A cent o' the funds we'd gathered till Liddy came  
back to town —

Her that wuz Liddy Thomas who married a man  
named Brown.

The case wuz ourn in justice, since we had diskiv-  
vered it,

But the Women's Benevolent Circle felt called upon  
to sit

In a solemn special session when news o' it got about,  
An' stubbornly they insisted on a-helpin' Liddy out!

So Tabithy Jenkins Thomas, who wuz Worthy  
President

O' the Aid Society, told 'em they shouldn't pay a cent;  
 That Liddy's distress wuz ourn, an' there wuzn't the slightest call  
 Fer the Women's Benevolent Circle to interfere at all.

Think o' the meanness on't! Our body eleven year old,  
 With never a chance to aid distress till this one, as I've told;  
 An' after we'd been an' found it, to have them a-tryin' to claim  
 The credit fer helpin' Liddy! We felt it a mortal shame!

So Tabithy Jenkins Thomas she writ 'em a little note  
 That *we* would take care o' Liddy; an' *they* needn't pay a groat;  
 An' she called it a bit onchristian fer them to be dippin' in  
 When we had *diskivvered* Liddy, forsook o' her kith an' kin.

Mehitabel Prudence Tippen, the Benevolent Circle's head,  
 Writ back to us summat uppish, an' in her epistle said  
 That Charity's realms wuz boundless as the stars in heaven were,

Which wuz jest the kind o' letter we figgered we'd  
git from her.

Then Tabithy writ another, an' say, 'twuz a  
scorcher, too,  
A-tellin' Mehitabel Tippen some things that wuz  
good an' true;  
An' pendin' Miss Tippen's answer, she had Liddy's  
case referred  
To the Indigent Poor committee, to wait till we had  
some word.

Now here wuz a purty pickle! Not one o' us but  
jest yearned  
To be doin' fer Liddy Thomas, an' yit we jest fumed  
an' burned  
With hon'rab' indignation, an' couldn't lend aid,  
becuz  
We must wait for Mehitabel Tippen, an' settle whose  
case it wuz.

Mehitabel Tippen answered, in the course o' a week  
or so,  
With a note to Tabithy Thomas that wuz jest full  
o' brag an' blow,  
In which she again insisted there wuzn't no claim on  
Need,  
An' Charity wuz a blessin' that never acknowledged  
creed!

An' Tabithy she wuz hoppin'! She read it all  
through an' vowed  
By all o' the stars in heaven there shouldn't no one  
be 'lowed  
To interfere in the case o' Liddy if she had to go an'  
stay  
On watch beside Liddy's bedside, an' keep other  
folks away.

So the Indigent Poor committee wuz ordered to  
make report,  
An' we authorized sech expenses as all o' us thought  
we ort,  
But found, when we looked fer Liddy to prove our  
contention with,  
She'd been taken indoors an' cared fer by a fam'ly  
name o' Smith!

Oh, the burnin' injustice o' it! Our treasury  
groanin' fat,  
An' Mehitabel's interferin' permittin' a thing like  
that!  
A-provin' that sisterhood o' love is only a dazzlin'  
myth,  
An' thrustin' *our* crown o' glory on a family name o'  
Smith!

## THE PASSING OF THE PRAIRIE

**T**HEY have tamed it with their harrows;  
they have broken it with plows;  
Where the bison used to range it some  
one's built himself a house;  
They have stuck it full of fence posts, they have  
girdled it with wire,  
They have shamed it and profaned it with an auto-  
mobile tire;  
They have bridged its gullied rivers; they have peo-  
pled it with men;  
They have churched it, they have schooled it, they  
have steepled it — Amen.  
They have furrowed it with ridges, they have seeded  
it with grain,  
And the West that was worth knowing I shall never  
see again.

They have smothered all its campfires, where the  
bearded plainsmen slept;  
They have driven up their cattle where the skulking  
coyote crept;  
They have made themselves a pasture where the  
timid deer would browse,  
Where the antelope were feeding they have dotted  
o'er with cows;

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There's a yokel's tuneless whistling down the bison's  
winding trail,  
Where the redman's arrow fluttered there's a woman  
with a pail  
Driving up the cows for milking; they have cut its  
wild extent  
Into forty-acre patches till its glory is all spent.

I remember in the sixties, when as far as I could see,  
It had never lord or ruler but the buffalo and me;  
Ere the blight of man was on it, and the endless acres  
lay  
Just as God Almighty left them on the restful Sev-  
enth Day.  
When no sound rose from its vastness but a mur-  
mured hum and dim  
Like the echoed void of Silence in an unheard Prai-  
rie hymn,  
And I lay at night and rested in my bed of blankets  
curled  
Much alone as if I was the only man in all the world.

But the prairie's passed, or passing, with the passing  
of the years,  
Till there is no West worth knowing and there are  
no Pioneers.  
They have riddled it with railroads, throbbing on  
and on and on,  
They have riddled it of dangers till the zest of it is  
gone.

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And I've saddled up my pony, for I'm dull and lone-  
some here,  
To go westward, westward, westward, till we find a  
new frontier,  
To get back to God's own wildness and the skies we  
used to know —  
But there is no West; it's conquered — and I don't  
know where to go!

## A TALE OF THE TRAIL

**T**HIS life's a middlin' crooked trail, an' after  
forty year  
Of knockin' 'round I'm free to say th'  
right ain't always clear.

I've seen a lot of folks go wrong — get off th' main  
highroad

An' fetch up in a swamp somewhere, almost before  
they knowed.

I don't pretend to be no judge of right and wrong  
in men,

I ain't been perfect all my life, an' may not be again;  
An' when I see a man who looks as though he'd  
gone astray,

I think perhaps he started right, but somehow lost  
his way.

I like to think th' good in folks by far outweighs  
the ill:

Th' trail of life is middlin' hard, and lots of it up  
hill.

There's places where there ain't no guides or sign-  
boards up, an' so

It's partly guess work an' part luck which way you  
chance to go.



I've seen th' trails fork some myself, an' when I had  
to choose

I wasn't sure when I struck out if it was win or lose.  
So when I see a man who looks as though he'd gone  
astray

I like to think he started right an' only lost his way.

✓ I've seen a lot of folks start out with grit an' spunk  
to 'scale

Th' hills that purple over there an' somehow lose  
th' trail.

I've seen 'em stop an' start again, not sure about th'  
road,

An' found 'em lost on some blind trail almost before  
they knowed.

I've seen 'em circlin', tired out, with every pathway  
blind,

With cliffs before 'em, mountain high, an' sloughs  
an' swamps behind,

I've seen 'em stringin' through th' dusk, when twi-  
light's gettin' gray,

A-lookin' for th' main highroad — poor chaps who've  
lost their way.

It ain't so far from right to wrong — th' trail ain't  
hard to lose,

There's times I'd almost give my horse to know  
which one to choose.

There ain't no signboards on th' road t' keep you on  
th' track,

Wrong's sometimes white as driven snow, an' right  
looks awful black!

I don't set up to be no judge of right an' wrong in  
men,

I've lost th' trail sometimes myself — I may get lost  
again,

An' when I see some man who looks as though he'd  
gone astray

I want to shove my hand in his an' help him find th'  
way.

## ART IN FROZEN CREEK

**H**E was a tourist, rich I guess; an' he stepped  
down off the train  
Way out at th' town o' Frozen Crick, in th'  
heart o' th' Western plain.

Hi Cobb was there an' Wryneck Potts an' Amos  
Drake an' me,  
(We allus 'lowed to 'tend th' train to see what we  
could see.)

He stepped up brisk to Wryneck Potts an' he says  
to him: "My man,  
Have you got a drug store handy here?" An'  
Wryneck Potts he ran  
An' p'inted out th' one we had an' th' tourist hurried  
there,  
Ez if somebody was in straits an' he had no time t'  
spare.

An' Wryneck Potts he told Hi Cobb from th' feller's  
look of pain  
He thought his wife or child or kin was dyin' on th'  
train,  
An' Cobb he turned to Amos Drake an' Amos turned  
to me  
But he didn't say he 'lowed on it, he said 'twas true,  
you see.

An' I says: "Cobb, go git Doc Duff an' bring him over here

While I run up to th' funder end an' tell th' engineer, So's he don't pull out"—'cuz we may be rough an' slow in Frozen Crick,

But we got a sight o' sympathy if there's anybody sick.

An' Cobb he run an' so did I an' Doc says: "Is she bad?"

'Cuz a couple dozen quinine pills was all th' dope he had.

An' he an' Cobb come runnin' back an' he says to Wryneck: "Jump!

Go fetch me a couple quarts of rye an' a crutch an' a stomach pump."

'Cuz Doc he liked to be prepared; an' then I run across

To th' drug store where th' feller was an' I says to him: "Ol' Hoss,

We've got th' doctor over there cuz in sickness we're all pards."

An' he looked at me an' says: "Oh, Pshaw! I'm buyin' postal cards!"

We might 'a' used th' feller rough, but he run back to th' train

An' before th' word of it got out th' train was gone again.

An' Wryneck Potts with crutch an' pump an' his  
couple quarts o' rye

For first relief, went back again 'cuz th' crisis was  
gone by.

An' Cobb he says th' postal craze is gettin' smeared  
on thick

When any one wants postal cards with scenes o'  
Frozen Crick.

An' Doc Duff says: "A call's two plunks an' who's  
to pay my fee?"

So Wryneck Potts says: "Step up, Gents. This  
time th' drink's on me."

## THE FORUM

**D**OWN to Hicks's grocery store,  
Tariff's all a settled score.  
Income tax is voted on,  
Deficit's all paid and gone,  
Naval program's all arranged,  
Immigration laws is changed,  
And we found, on settlin' these,  
Time to lick the Japanese.

But we can't agree at all  
Where to build the city hall!

Down to Hicks's grocery store,  
Africa ain't dark no more.  
Hicks traced Teddy's route by rail  
With a dried salt herring's tail  
On a map, and Homer Pry  
Drewed us all a tsetse fly  
On a paper sack that Finn  
Bought some boneless codfish in.

But we ain't got figured out  
Who gets mail on our new route!

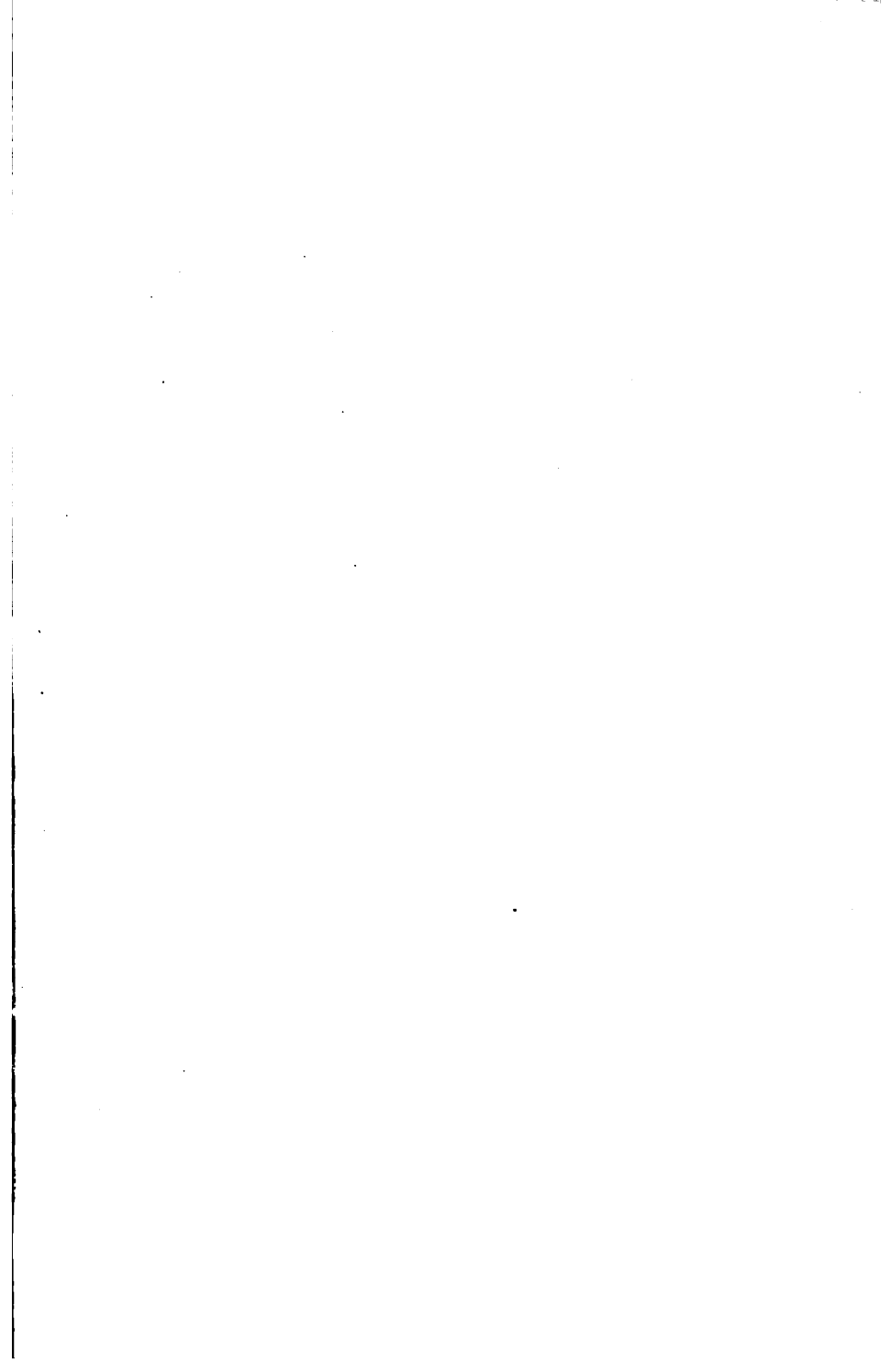
Down to Hicks's grocery store,  
I allow we've settled more

Burnin' questions in a night  
Than the courts — an' done it right.  
Hicks, he allus keeps in touch  
With the world's crowned heads an' such,  
An' there's very little goes  
On abroad but what he knows.

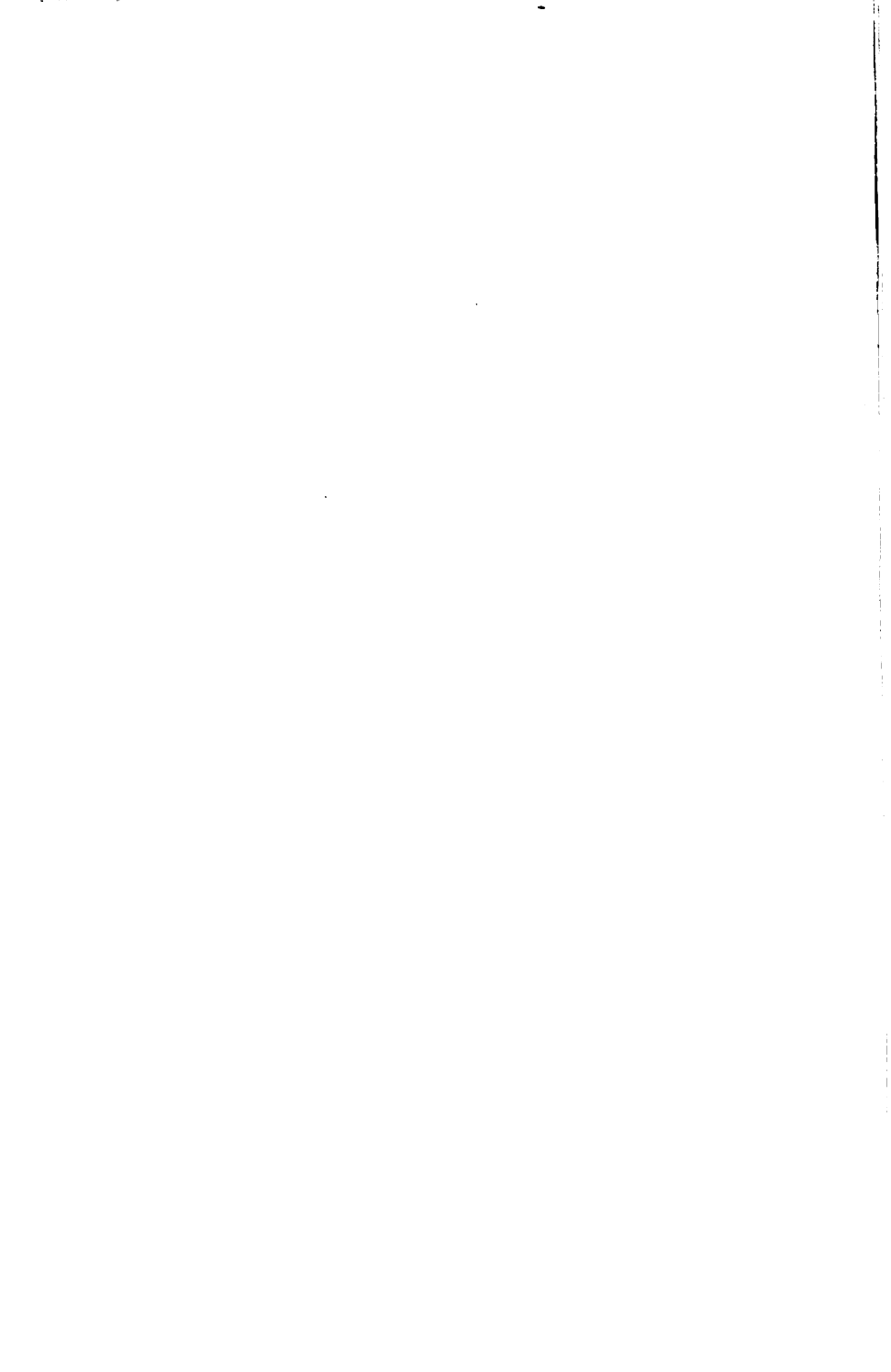
But he says to Treadwell Pew:  
"Who'll I charge them herrings to?"

cf

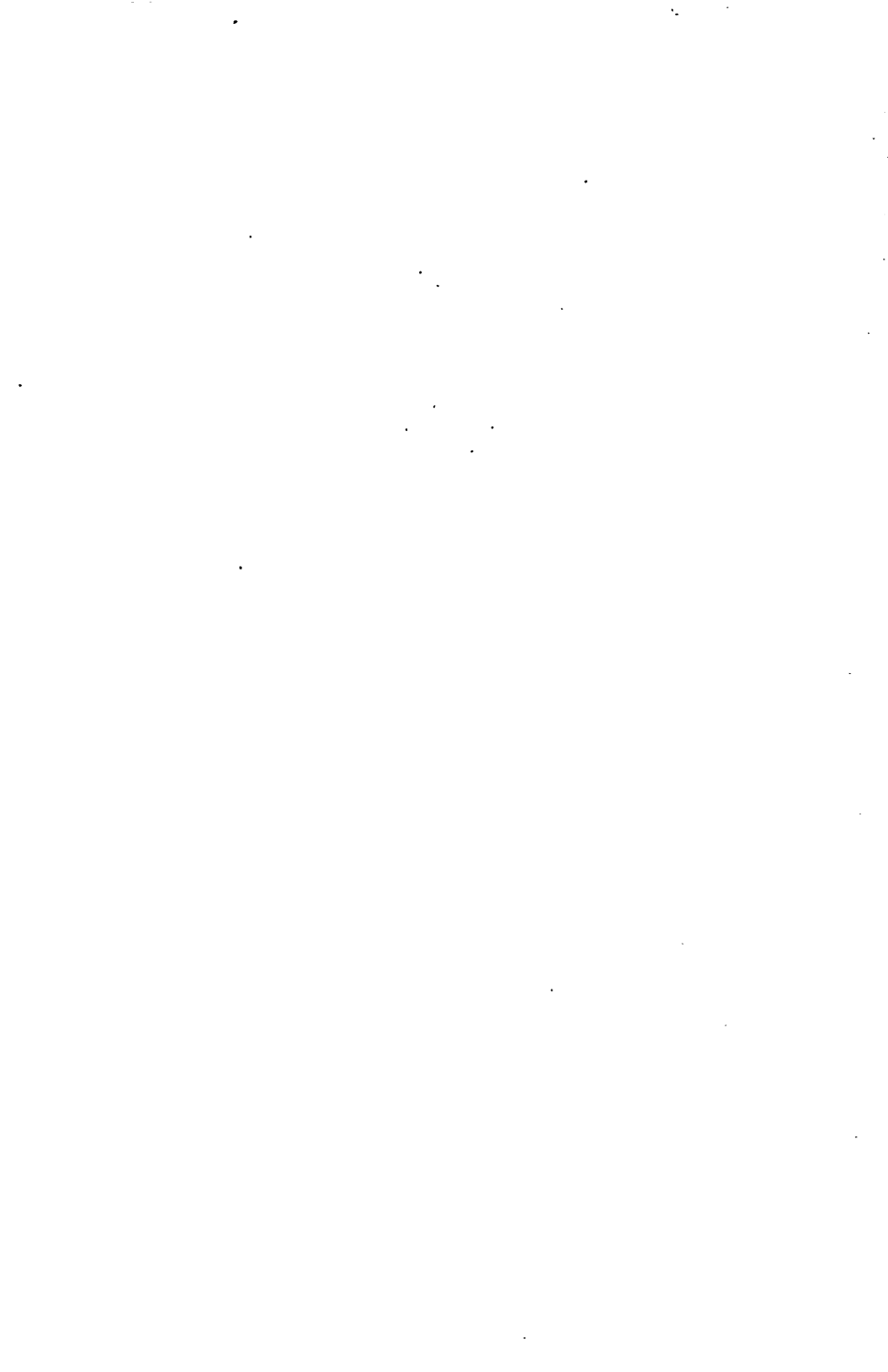
JW











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